Dewey extradition process begins. PAGE 2
Fork & Spoon distributes free meals with help from SFALC. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

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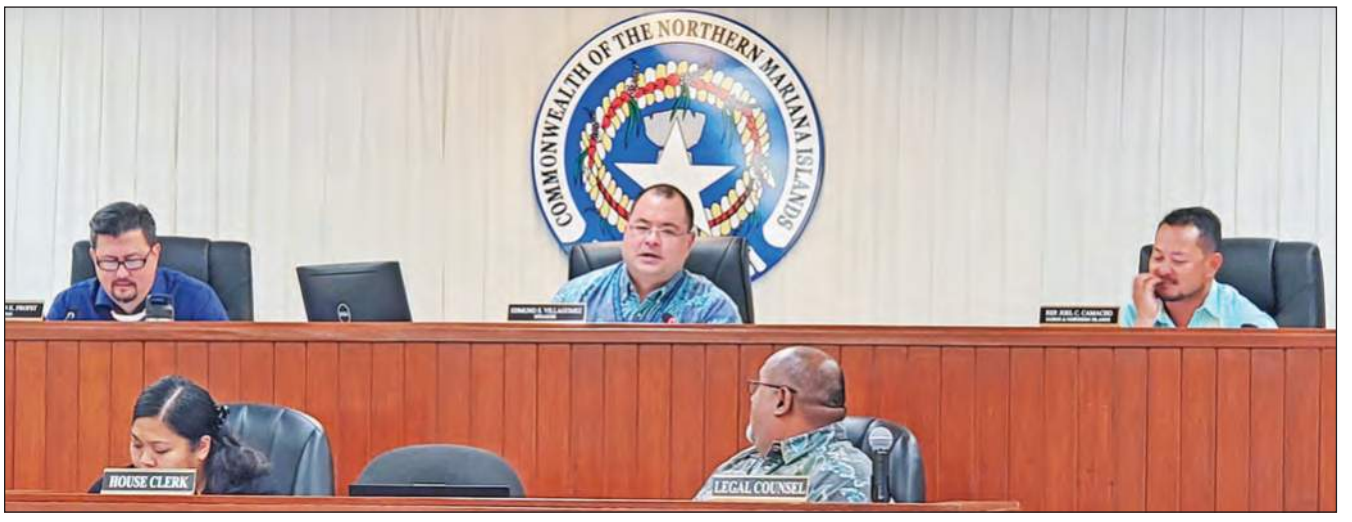


FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), extreme left on second row, offers a motion as House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), center, and vice speaker Rep. Joel C. Camacho (Ind-Saipan) listen during the House session last Thursday.

Propst's possible delegate run will be known tonight

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Floor leader says Kilili raised the bar so high

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) disclosed yesterday he is going to announce tonight, Tuesday, whether or not he intends to run for the office of the CNMI's delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives this November.

See PROPST on Page 4

Kilili: Tinian, Rota diabetes patients now have access to cheaper insulin

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Diabetes patients on Tinian and Rota will now have access to cheaper insulin.

Sablan

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) said in his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend that his office has been working

See INSULIN on Page 4

NO DIPLOMA? NO PROBLEM!

Navy again lowers requirements as it struggles to meet recruitment goals

AP

The USS P*aul Hamilton* is seen after passing through the Strait of Hormuz, May 19, 2023. The U.S. Navy is starting to enlist individuals who didn't graduate from high school or get a GED, marking the second time in about a year that the service has opened the door to lower-performing recruits as it struggles to meet enlistment goals.

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)— The U.S. Navy is starting to enlist individuals who didn't graduate from high school or get a GED, marking the second time in about a year that the service has opened

See NAVY on Page 4

USS *Hopper* makes first visit to Saipan

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The USS *Hopper* (DDG 70) made its first visit to the CNMI yesterday and is expected to stay on Saipan until Friday for some needed rest and recuperation for her crew before embarking on the next leg of deployment.

The USS *Hopper*, under the leadership of commanding officer Corey Millis, made its inaugural port call on Saipan yesterday morning.

The vessel is an Arleigh

See USS on Page 4

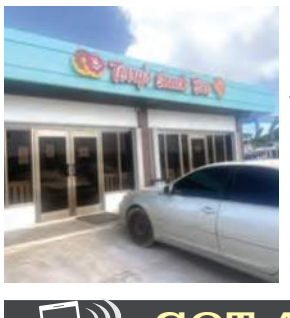
KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The USS *Hopper* (DDG 70) made its first visit to the CNMI yesterday and is expected to stay on Saipan until Friday for some needed rest and recuperation for her crew before embarking on the next leg of deployment. The USS *Hopper* (DDG 70) is an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer that is multi-mission capable with one of its highlights being ballistic mission defense. The over 550-foot vessel carries about 325 sailors who will be on Saipan for the rest of the week.

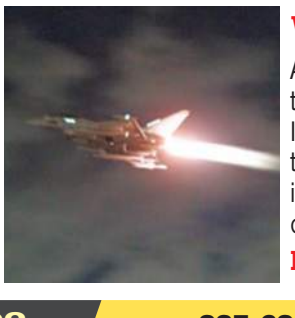
KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

From left, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, USS *Hopper* executive officer Cdr. Andrea L. Benvenuto, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, USS *Hopper* commanding officer Cdr. Corey Millis, and USS *Hopper* command master chief Cmdcm. William Kalmbach.

INSIDE



BUSINESS
In an ever-advancing world, things change quick, but some don't, like the recipes at Terry's Snack Bar, aka "Bolis" in Chalan Kanoa.
PAGE 11



WORLD
After a weekend of retaliatory strikes, the United States on Sunday warned Iran and the militias it arms and funds that it will conduct more attacks if American forces in the Mideast continue to be targeted.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
Accepting the Grammy for best pop vocal album, Taylor Swift announced that she a whole new album coming out after keeping it a secret for two years.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Dewey extradition process begins

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Office of the Attorney General has begun the extradition process for Charles Lee Dewey III, also known as Carter Allen Widmor, with the filing of a complaint for extradition with the Superior Court.

Assistant attorney general Heather Barcinas filed the extradition complaint against Dewey last week, launching the extradition process that would return Dewey to Indiana to answer the numerous charges filed against him.

The court will have a status conference on the matter on Feb. 14 to discuss updates on Dewey's extradition.

Dewey, who has been going by the alias Widmor since fleeing the state of Indiana to Saipan back in 2022, was arrested last Jan. 26 pursuant to a joint apprehension mission between federal and local law enforcement agencies. He was arrested at the Kagman Community Health Center where he works.

According to court documents, Dewey faces over six outstanding arrest warrants in Indiana, on multiple cases involving rape, sexual misconduct with minors, sexual battery, child solicitation, possession of child pornography, dissemination of matter harmful to a minor, and more.

The charges against Dewey date as far back as 2020.

During his bail hearing last Jan. 29, Dewey, through assistant public defender Emily Thompson, waived his right to an extradition hearing, allowing the state of Indiana to pursue extradition as soon as possible.

Barcinas informed the court that the extradition process could take up to 45 days as the extradition letter must go through the Indiana governor.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The extradition process for Charles Lee Dewey III begins with the Office of the Attorney General filing a complaint for extradition against the Indiana fugitive wanted on multiple charges, including rape.

According to court documents, the Northern District of Indiana, Great Lakes Regional Fugitive Task Force requested the U.S. Marshals Service District of the Northern Mariana Islands last Jan. 8 for help in locating and apprehending Dewey. Great Lake's RFTF shared that their information showed that Dewey has been residing on Saipan.

On Jan. 19, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations met with the Department of Public Safety and informed them that they believed to have located Dewey, who has been using the alias Carter Allen Widmor.

HSI managed to get a copy of Dewey's license under the alias Widmor and it matched a photo taken of Dewey in the state of Indiana.

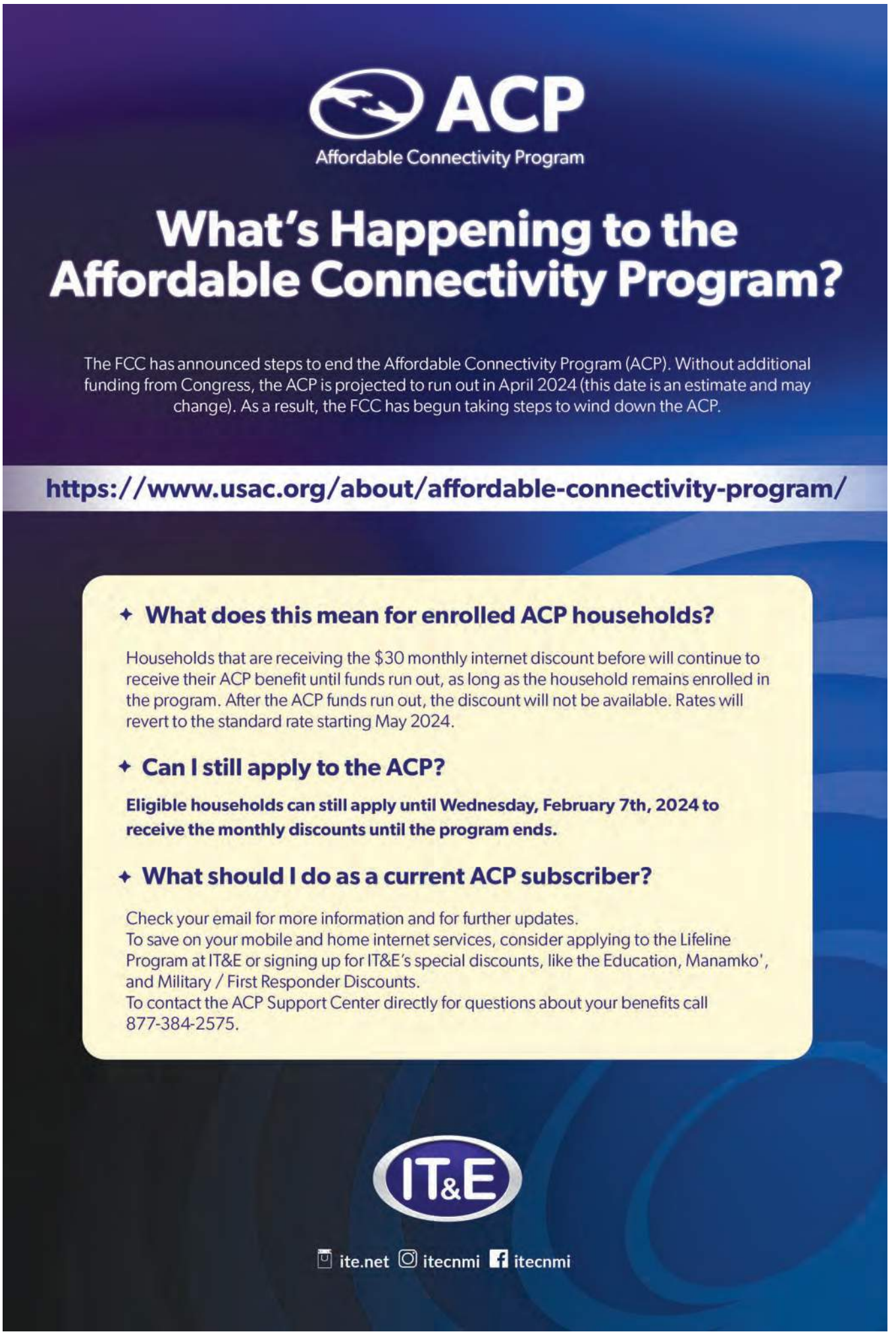
A media search was also conducted on the alias Dewey was using and one photo of him with staff at the Eucon International School where he previously taught English classes surfaced. However, law enforcement determined on Jan. 24 that Dewey was no longer employed or associated with Eucon.

Later, law enforcement learned that Dewey frequents another school. Through their cooperation, law enforcement learned that Dewey applied for a position with the school and photos provided by the school helped identify the fugitive.

On Jan. 26, law enforcement learned that Dewey was employed at the Kagman Health Center and a briefing was held in preparation for his apprehension.

That same day, at around 2:35pm, law enforcement officers went to the Kagman Health Center and met with Dewey in his office. Dewey allegedly admitted to officers his real name and he was immediately arrested.

He was charged with one count of fugitive from justice and was booked and detained at DOC.


ACP
Affordable Connectivity Program
What's Happening to the Affordable Connectivity Program?
The FCC has announced steps to end the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Without additional funding from Congress, the ACP is projected to run out in April 2024 (this date is an estimate and may change). As a result, the FCC has begun taking steps to wind down the ACP.
https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/
What does this mean for enrolled ACP households?
Households that are receiving the $30 monthly internet discount before will continue to receive their ACP benefit until funds run out, as long as the household remains enrolled in the program. After the ACP funds run out, the discount will not be available. Rates will revert to the standard rate starting May 2024.
Can I still apply to the ACP?
Eligible households can still apply until Wednesday, February 7th, 2024 to receive the monthly discounts until the program ends.
What should I do as a current ACP subscriber?
Check your email for more information and for further updates.
To save on your mobile and home internet services, consider applying to the Lifeline Program at IT&E or signing up for IT&E's special discounts, like the Education, Manamko', and Military / First Responder Discounts.
To contact the ACP Support Center directly for questions about your benefits call 877-384-2575.
IT&E
ite.net itecnmi itecnmi

Marciano appointed to lead Indigenous Affairs Office

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

In this file photo taken in April 2021, Luella Ichihara Marciano shows stimulus checks for her four family members that she picked up from her box at the U.S. Post Office in Chalan Kanoa. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios appointed her last week to serve as resident executive for the Indigenous Affairs Office.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has appointed retired teacher Luella Ichihara Marciano to serve as resident executive of the Indigenous Affairs Office.

In his memorandum addressed to all department and activity heads on Thursday, Palacios said Marciano will be the acting resident executive for Indigenous Affairs Office until the Senate confirms her appointment.

The position has been vacant since Ross Songao Manglona passed away last November.

Palacios also informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) on Thursday that they are confident that Marciano is qualified to fulfill the vital responsibilities of this office.

The governor told Marciano that he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang are confident that she is qualified for the position and will be an asset to the CNMI.

Marciano ran for a House of Representative Precinct 2 seat under the NMI Democratic Party during the November 2020 general election. She lost in the election. She is an active member of the Refaluwasch for Good Governance.

Fork & Spoon distributes free meals with help from SFALC

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Fil-American Lions Club members and Fork & Spoon staff pose for a group photo.

Fork & Spoon House of Sizzling celebrated its fourth anniversary by providing free meals at the Nuestra Senora Bithen Delos Remedios Parish in Tanapag last Feb. 4.

To make this event possible, the Gualo Rai restaurant collaborated with the Saipan Fil-American Lions Club. The owners of Fork & Spoon, Ray and Joan Boongaling, reached out to the club to organize this event as a way to express their gratitude to the community for their support and patronage.

Saipan Fil-American Lions Club president Socorro Huliganga emphasized the importance of partnerships when it comes to community services.

The group is grateful to the Tanapag parishioners for the opportunity to share their blessings. They also extend their appreciation to Saipan Ice & Water Co., Fr. James Balajadia, Fr. Eric Paluku, Pauline Kapileo, volunteers, and staff for their valuable assistance.

If you wish to join the Lions Club, you can call Huliganga at (670) 989-6407 and secretary Gemabelle Aringo (670) 287-9805. You can also go to their website at www.lionsclubs.org. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fork & Spoon House of Sizzling staff with owner Joan Boongaling, third from left.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/

Fork & Spoon distributed free food to parishioners of Nuestra Senora Bithen Delos Remedios Parish in Tanapag last Feb. 4.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Fil-American Lions Club president Socorro Huliganga, second from right, supervises Fork & Spoon's free meal distribution last Feb. 4.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Department of Public Works
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

NOTICE TO ADJACENT LANDOWNERS SURROUNDING THE PROPOSED ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT OF ROUTE 310 (TAPOCHAU ROAD) AND ROUTE 38 (CHALAN GALAIDE/NAVY HILL ROAD)

APPLICANT: CNMI DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
PROJECT: TAPOCHAU ROAD AND CHALAN GALAIDE/NAVY HILL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
COASTAL PERMIT # SMS-2024-024

The CNMI Department of Public Works submitted a Major Siting application to the Division of Coastal Resources Management for the improvement of Tapochau Road and the Chalan Galaide/Navy Hill Road on 23 January 2024.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Route 310 (Tapochao Road) A 2.1-mile section of coral road (Route 310/Tapochau Road) would be paved and upgraded with safety measures. The improved road would consist of a 22-foot-wide travel lane with a 4-foot paved shoulder on each side; curb, gutter, and sidewalk at left side; and drainage system. The improved road would also consist of multiple interface connections and driveways to the adjacent properties. The new pavement would be asphalt with complete base and sub-base fill materials. The road improvement limits extend the full width of 60 feet for Right-of-Way (ROW) to address roadway structures, inclusive of pavement, base and sub-base, drainage conveyance, ponding basins, curb and gutter, traffic signs, markings, and roadside safety. Construction activities would include clearing and grubbing, road grading and bed preparation, and subsequent paving of the road. All proposed road improvements would occur within the ROW that has been delineated in the engineering design plans.

In order to meet Federal roadway design guidelines that address the management of surface water runoff and drainages, two ponding basins were incorporated into the Route 310 (Tapochau Road) design plans.

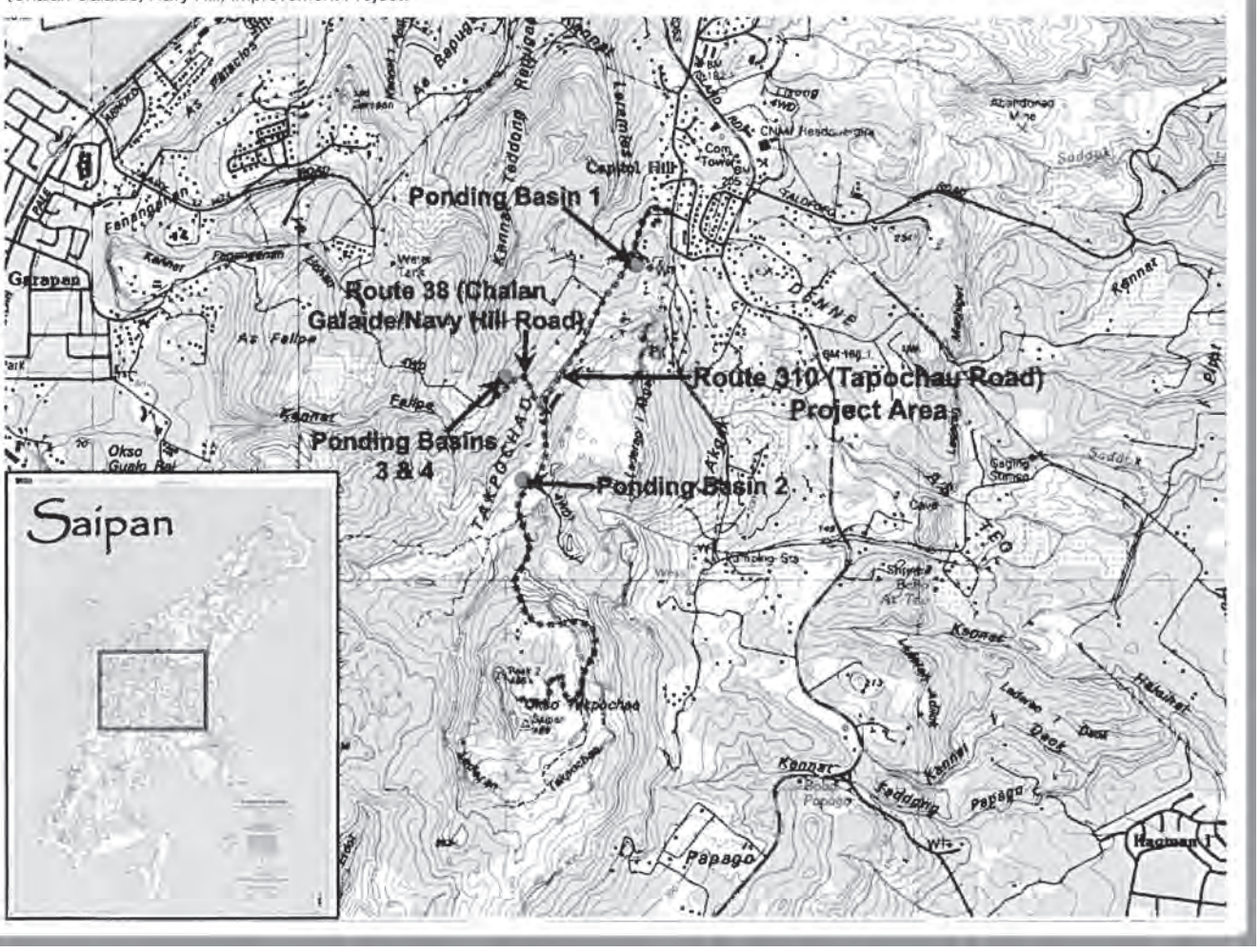
Route 38 (Chalan Galaide/Navy Hill Road) A 0.25-mile section of coral road (Route 38/Chalan Galaide/Navy Hill Road) would be paved and upgraded with safety measures. The improved road would consist of a 20- foot-wide travel lane with a 4-foot concrete swale. The new pavement would be asphalt with complete base and sub-base fill materials. Construction activities would include clearing and grubbing, road grading and bed preparation, and subsequent paving of the road. All proposed road improvements would occur within the ROW that has been delineated in the engineering design plans.

In order to meet Federal roadway design guidelines that address the management of surface water runoff and drainages, two ponding basins were incorporated into the Route 38 (Chalan Galaide/Navy Hill Road) design plans

This notice is being issued to comply with NMIAC § 15-10-206(e)(2)(i) "Alternative Adjacent Property Owner Notification".

Written comments can be submitted by mail to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, or emailed to permitting@d-crm.gov.mp.

Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300 if you have any questions or would like more information on the Route 310 (Tapochau Road) and Route 38 (Chalan Galaide/Navy Hill) Improvement Project.



Execution of search warrant turns into a drug bust

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A couple in Papago was arrested last week after allegedly being busted for drugs during the execution of a search warrant pursuant to a separate theft case.

Brandon Joel L. Benavente and Consalacion M. Sablan were arrested last week for alleged possession of methamphetamine and unregistered firearms when police executed a search warrant on the two's residence pursuant to a separate theft case.

The pair was brought before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho for a bail hearing last Friday. They were each slapped with a $100,000 cash bail.

Both Benavente and Sablan were remanded back to Department of Corrections' custody after their bail hearing where they will remain pending court proceedings.

The pair was ordered to return to court on Feb. 9 for a preliminary hearing while their arraignment is set for March 4.

According to court documents, police were granted a search warrant for Sablan and Benavente's residence in Papago last Jan. 31, in relation to a pending theft case. The search warrant also authorized a search of the property's surroundings and a blue color Toyota Echo they owned.

When the DPS team executed the warrant on Feb. 1, they escorted both Benavente and Sablan out of the house so a thorough search could be done.

The team allegedly found a Daisy brand .22 long rifle leaning against a wall by a mirror. Officers also uncovered a total of 30 pieces of .22 caliber ammunition and some stolen items related to other burglary and theft cases.

In the search done on the pair's blue Toyota Echo, court documents indicate that the officers did not find evidence in the theft case, but K9 officer Randal Taitano and his dog, Laca, allegedly found a broken glass pipe, an ashtray with a clear mini-Ziplock bag containing marijuana, and a Ziplock bag with two orange pills.

Inside the residence, DPS K9 officer Jesse Deleon Guerrero and his dog, Beni, were called in. Together, they helped officers find multiple mini-Ziplock baggies containing white crystal-like substances in different areas of the home.

The substances found in the home and in the Toyota Echo later tested presumptive positive for methamphetamine.

At about 9:33am, police arrested both Benavente and Sablan for illegal possession.

NAVY

From page 1

the door to lower-performing recruits as it struggles to meet enlistment goals.

The decision follows a move in December 2022 to bring in a larger number of recruits who score very low on the Armed Services Qualification Test. Both are fairly rare steps that the other military services largely avoid or limit, even though they are all finding it increasingly difficult to attract the dwindling number of young people who can meet the military's physical, mental and moral standards.

Under the new plan, Navy recruits without an education credential will be able to join as long as they score 50 or above on the qualification test, which is out of 99. The last time the service took individuals without education credentials was in 2000.

"We get thousands of people into our recruiting stations every year that want to join the Navy but do not have an education credential. And we just turn them away," said Vice Adm. Rick Cheeseman, the Navy's chief of personnel, in an interview Friday with The Associated Press.

He said that of the more than 2,400 who were turned away last year, as many as 500 of them could score high enough to get in. He said he has already sent an order to his recruiters to start the new expanded effort, adding, "I'm hoping all my recruiters have called all 2,442 of them in the last 72 hours, and we'll see how it goes ... We'll try to get some test takers this weekend."

In the wake of the pandemic, the services have faced significant enlistment challenges. COVID-19 forced the military to shut down recruiting stations and they were closed out of high schools and many public fairs of events where they historically found success reaching prospective candidates.

But even as things opened up, the military struggled to compete with higher-paying businesses in the tight job market, particularly as companies began to offer the types of benefits — such as college funding — that had often made the military a popular choice. Those economic problems were only exacerbated by the sharp political divide in the country and young people's fears of being killed or injured going to war.

Last fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30, the Navy, Army and Air Force all failed to meet their recruitment goals, while the Marine Corps and the tiny Space Force met their targets. The previous fiscal year, the Army fell 15,000 short of its enlistment goal of 60,000, and the other services had to dig into the pools of delayed entry candidates in order to meet their recruiting numbers.

Last year, the Navy's enlistment goal was 37,700, but the service brought in just 31,834. This year, Cheeseman said, he set the goal higher — at 40,600. The total size of the Navy for 2024 is set at 337,800.

"I need these sailors. So it's a stretch goal. We're telling our recruiters to go get 40,600 people to join the Navy," he said. "We don't fully expect to get that many. But we're going for it."

The other services have largely balked at such changes.

The Navy is the only service that enlists anyone considered a "category four" recruit, meaning they scored 30 or less on the qualification test. The service expanded the number of those category four recruits arguing that a number of jobs — such as cook or boatswain mate — don't require an overall high test score, as long as they meet the job standards.

The Army will only take those lowest scoring candidates into their so-called Future Soldier Prep Course, which gives them weeks of instruction and the opportunity to increase their score in order to make the grade and enlist. The Navy allows low-scoring recruits to go through its Future Sailor Prep Course but doesn't require an increased score to enlist.

In addition, the Army and Marine Corps require a high school diploma or GED equivalent, and the Air Force said it will only take recruits without a diploma if they score a 65 or higher on the qualification test. Those numbers are very small — just 110 of the nearly 26,900 Air Force recruits brought in last year, either had a GED or no education credential at all.

Other services cite concerns that lower-performing recruits may be more likely to wash out of boot camp or could present more disciplinary problems over time.

Cheeseman said he believes the biggest risk is that they do fail boot camp at higher rates, but he said the difference hasn't been significant so far for the low-scoring recruits brought in last year. Overall, 11.4% of those recruits didn't finish boot camp, compared to less than 6.5% of the high-scoring sailors.

He said Navy leaders had been talking about opening up enlistment to those without high school credentials for a while in an effort to expand the pool of potential sailors.

INSULIN

From page 1

with drug manufacturer Sanofi to extend its Copay Savings Program to Tinian and Rota and learned that this week their efforts were successful.

This means Tinian and Rota diabetes patients who need access to insulin can now buy them for just $35 per month.

Sablan said Saipan residents were able to access the Copay Savings Program beginning Jan. 1, 2024, but Sanofi inadvertently left out Tinian and Rota.

The Copay Savings Program caps out-of-pocket costs for the company's most popular insulin, Lantus, at $35 per month for those with private insurance.

Sablan said those without insurance can receive the discount through Sanofi's Insulin Value Savings Program.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2024, patients in the Marianas were given access to Eli Lilly's Insulin Savings Card Program, which automatically caps insulin out-of-pocket costs at $35 per month for those with commercial insurance.

Sablan said this move is expected to provide critical relief to people with diabetes who can face annual costs of more than $1,000 for the insulin they need to live.

Based on 2002 statistics, there are 3,019 known diabetes patients in the CNMI—mostly Chamorros, Carolinians, and Pacific islanders.

In 2008, the then-Department of Public Health estimated that about 30% or one third of the population of the CNMI have above normal levels of sugar in their blood.

PROPST

From page 1

Propst said he will be making the announcement at his parents' home in Susupe at 6pm.

"I'm grateful to those who have been supporting me and asked me to consider running for this [delegate] seat," he said.

The position will soon be vacant after incumbent, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP), announced he will not be seeking a ninth term.

Former representative Christina Marie E. Sablan recently told *Saipan Tribune* she is not running for delegate this year, but will support Propst if he chooses to do so.

Propst said making a run for delegate is a "huge" decision to make as anyone gunning for the position will have big shoes to fill.

The CNMI has a congressman who's served so wonderfully and the people have been so dependent on him, said Propst, referring to Sablan.

"It's a bittersweet feeling about him…not running again because he's done so much. And he's been so consistent," Propst added.

The lawmaker concedes nobody, including himself, can just walk in and get into that delegate seat and think they can do a better job than Sablan.

"He's raised the bar so high. And I hope that…whoever is elected to be delegate can carry on his mission and that's serving all the people, not just parties," Propst said.

He said Sablan has the ability to reach out beyond his own personal parties and has established friendships and built bridges.

"I want that to continue, regardless of who the delegate is," Propst said.

In response to a hypothetical question, Propst said if he were to seek the delegate position, he would run under the Democratic Party. He said it's clear which party in the United States' national parties has been so giving to the CNMI.

"By looking at what the CNMI received in federal aid from the American Rescue Plan Act to Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, to everything else, it's been largely pushed by President Joe Biden—a Democrat—with the Senate and the U.S. Congress."

He said Congress had been mostly Democrat in previous years, but has lately been dominated by Republicans, which has made things a little bit more difficult, but somehow Sablan, who caucuses with Democrats, finds a way.

With Sablan's decision not to seek re-election, more candidates are expected to run for the delegate's position this Nov. 5 election.

During his eight terms in Congress, Sablan either ran unopposed or won via overwhelming votes.

USS

From page 1

Burke class guided-missile destroyer that is multi-mission capable, one of which is ballistic mission defense. The over 550-foot vessel carries about 325 sailors who will be on Saipan for the rest of the week.

There to welcome the USS Hopper and its crew were Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David Apatang.

Palacios, in a statement to the media, said he is grateful to the USS *Hopper* for pulling through with its plans to visit Saipan.

The governor shared that the USS *Hopper* was initially set to visit the CNMI back in November 2023 but due to some issues, the port call was cancelled.

"We welcome Commander Millis and his crew of sailors, and the USS *Hopper* to Saipan. The vessel and the crew were scheduled to come last November, but due to operational issues, they had to cancel. But they're here and we're happy that they are here. They will be here for about four days. So the community will be seeing our Department of Defense folks," he said.

Palacios said this is only the first of many more visiting DOD ships this year as this has been in the works as part of the administration's plans to explore military tourism. "

"This is what we're talking about in terms of military tourism. We've been having conversations with our DOD partners, trying to get fleets to Saipan for R&Rs and we're thankful for the USS *Hopper* making its way to Saipan. We look forward to more future visits by the USS *Hopper* and hopefully other ships," he said.

Apatang also encouraged the fleet and its leaders to visit Rota and Tinian while on Saipan.

"We encourage you to visit the islands of Rota and Tinian. We hope you enjoy your stay and the CNMI's hospitality," he said.

In a brief statement from Millis, he said he and the rest of the USS *Hopper* crew have been looking forward to this visit. He, like the rest of his crew, had never visited the CNMI before.

"Most of the crew made reservations weeks, even months ago. We've been looking forward to this trip for months. A lot of them will be off the ship and exploring the island," he said.

The USS *Hopper*'s homeport for the last 25 years has been Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The vessel left Pearl Harbor to begin its six-month deployment in the Indo-Pacific last October 2023.

"For this deployment, we've spent a lot of time in the Philippine Sea patrolling and just ensuring a safe Indo-Pacific. We've got many more hours at sea during this deployment," said Millis.

BPD Office submits CNMI Draft Digital Equity Plan to NTIA

On its way to cultivating digital equity and inclusivity within the CNMI, the Broadband Policy and Development Office, established through the CNMI Office of the Governor, has written and submitted their Draft Digital Equity Plan to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

The BPD Office officially submitted the plan on Jan. 30, 2024, detailing comprehensive strategies to promote digital equity and support digital inclusion activities within the CNMI.

To further ensure digital inclusivity, the Draft Digital Equity Plan addresses and prioritizes digital disparities faced by eight covered populations, as defined by the NTIA, which are "identity groups and communities disproportionately impacted by digital inequity." These eight covered populations include: low-income households, aging populations, incarcerated individuals, veterans, people with disabilities, people with language barriers, racial and ethnic minorities, and rural inhabitants.

The submitted Draft Digital Equity Plan is currently under review by federal program officers, to be followed by a 30-day public comment period. The BPD Office highly encourages community input and feedback during this period as it is crucial for making any revisions that will allow for further digital inclusion throughout the CNMI.

The BPD Office will also dive deeper into the Draft Digital Equity Plan and facilitate an open discussion with the community through a town hall meeting that will kick-off the 30-day public comment period. This town hall meeting will not only discuss the plan but also allow for the public to get first-hand insights into The BPD Office's current updates with the Digital Equity Program.

The BPD Office also conducts a biweekly virtual meeting every other Friday at 3pm, ensuring all stakeholders are updated with The BPD Office's updates and developments. The meeting link can be accessed on the BPD website. The public is highly encouraged to join if interested. ***(PR)***

42 agricultural homestead plots move Pagan's resettlement efforts forward

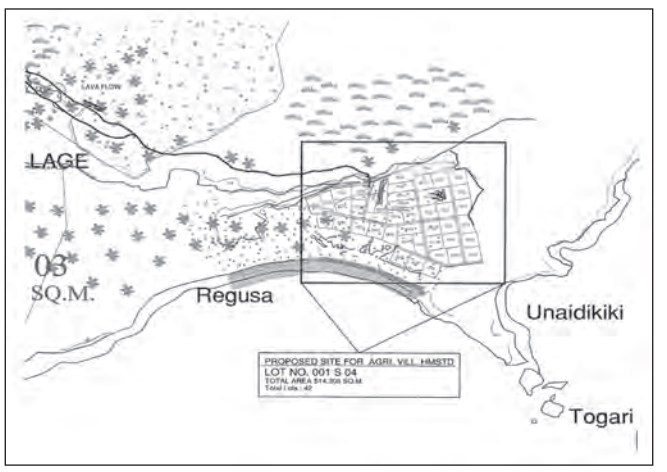
Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council vice chair Tonie Manibusan Tudela applauds the positive effort of Department of Public Lands Secretary Terry Santos toward the resettlement of Gani Islands of Pagan on the completion at least 40 surveyed agricultural homestead plots ready and available for bona fide Pagan residents.

Manibusan-Tudela expressed delight over this latest development in response to council resolution 17SNIMC05 authored by the vice chairwoman urging swift action on resettlement and redevelopment of Gani islands, north of Saipan.

The vice chair wishes to also offer her assistance to Pagan residents who need help when they are ready to submit their completed agricultural homestead applications and the required documents to the DPL homestead administrator at the second floor of the Joeten Dan Dan office on Saipan.

Manibusan-Tudela recalled that during the October 1969 Census of Pagan, at least 49 people were counted and considered Pagan residents. As of this writing, the DPL homestead administrator has so far received six applications for the 42 Pagan agricultural homestead plots.

The vice chairwoman, moreover, intimated that the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Service has an agriculture master plan for the Northern Islands of Gani, which has been in place since time of then-director Ross Manglona, and in place for implementation in Pagan's agricultural homesteads, like Hawaii's local USDA office and the University of Hawaii's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources which also provided selective breeding or cultivars research on tea growing in the Big Island of Hilo.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Department of Public Lands' Agriculture Homestead Plots are situated at Pagan's windward side of Regusa.

The NMC agriculture plan provides an historic overview of farming in Gani in the Northern Islands during the Spanish, German, Japanese, and U.S. eras. The master plan lists fruits and vegetables good for production on the island, including sugarcane, sweet potato, watermelon and pineapple. There was cotton production during the Japanese era while coconut for copra was grown during the German period.

The Japanese also grew sugarcane, pineapple, sweet potato, watermelon and tobacco among other crops.

The vice chairwoman fondly recalled the enthusiasm of the late Northern Islands Mayor Jerome Aldan during an historic economic summit when the mayor shared "the post-war industry that brought prosperity to the islanders was the copra industry. So successful was the industry that copra helped jumpstart what later became a Micronesia-wide development engine in the United Micronesian Development Association, the largest non-government development group in Micronesia."

UMDA, Manibusan-Tudela added, once owned the Palms Hotel and was a major stock holder in Continental Air Micronesia and Laolao Golf & Resort, among other major investments in the Commonwealth.

Manibusan-Tudela also pointed out that the bulk of the world's tea is grown in Asia's regions of China, Taiwan, India, Japan, and Sri Lanka.

Per Manibusan-Tudela, tea growing in these countries takes advantage of a combination of favorable conditions in climate, traditions and culture, which makes the tea industry thrive for centuries in those countries. The latest hotbed for tea growing and export production is also in Hawaii's Big Island on the Hilo/west side of Kona as an ideal place for growing tea while the east side is renowned for Hawaii's Kona coffee.

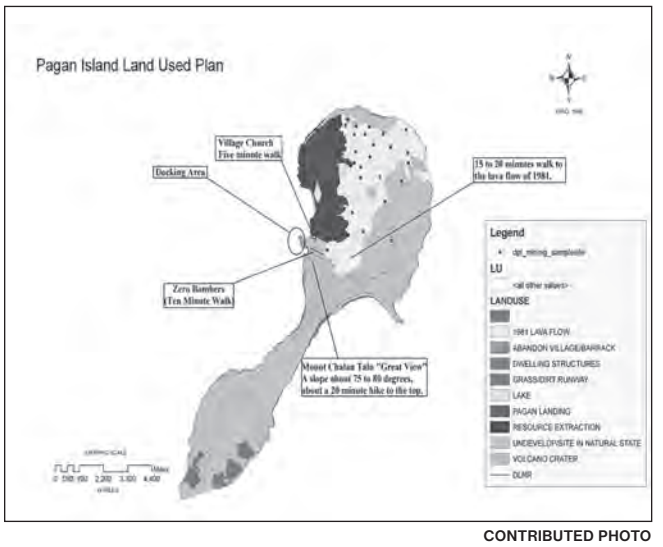
According to research, tea growing is known to grow well on factors not limited to acidic soil, good drainage, higher elevation, 75% to 90% humidity, 65°F to 80°F temperatures, year-round sunlight, and many other factors. Because tea growing in Hawaii is cultivated on volcanic soil, the leaves retain distinct Hawaii-origin flavor, more as a specialty refined tea.

Like NMC-CREES, Hawaii's local USDA office and the University of Hawaii's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources provides research on selective breeding or cultivars.

Also, like Hawaii, which consists of eight islands consisting of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, Molokai, Lanai, Kahoolawe, Niihau, and the Island of Hawaii (the Big Island), Gani Islands north of Saipan is comprised of 10 islands: Farallon de Medinilla, Anatahan, Sarigan, Guguan, Alamagan, Pagan, Agrihan, Asuncion, Maug, and Farallon de Pajaros farthest north and closest to Japan. All of the Gani Islands are surrounded by the world's famed Marianas Trench. ***(PR)***

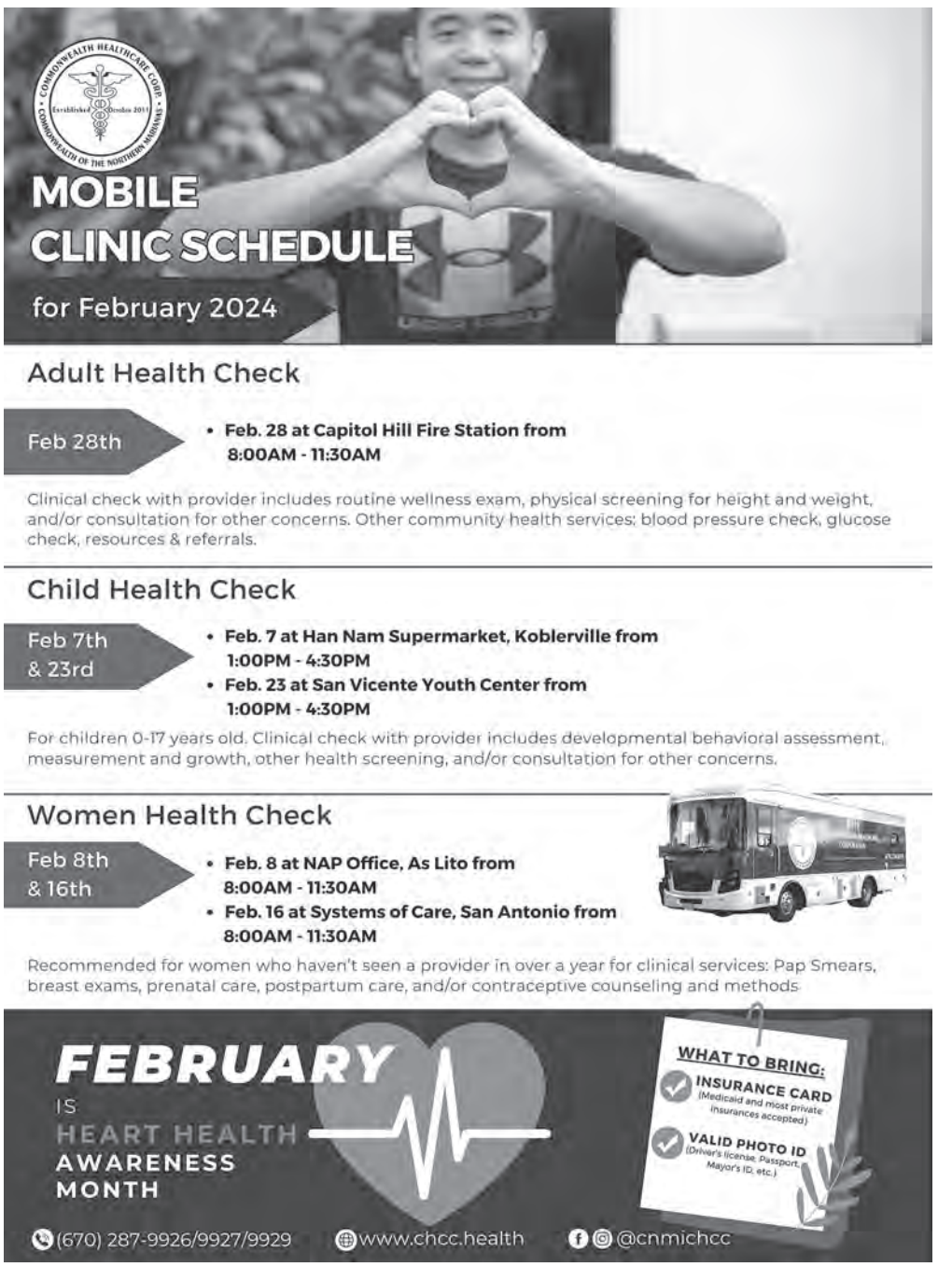
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Islands Mayor Valentino Taisacan, standing third left, Public Lands Advisory Board nominee Kodep Ogumoro-Uludong, Connie Togawa, 17th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council chair Marian DLG Tudela, vice chair Antonia M. Tudela, secretary Carmen C. Pangelinan, former Northern Islands mayor Vicente Santos, Taisacan's staff Paul Santos, Mario Santos, John Santos, former mayor Vicente Santos, and Lorna Iginoef pose for a group photo.



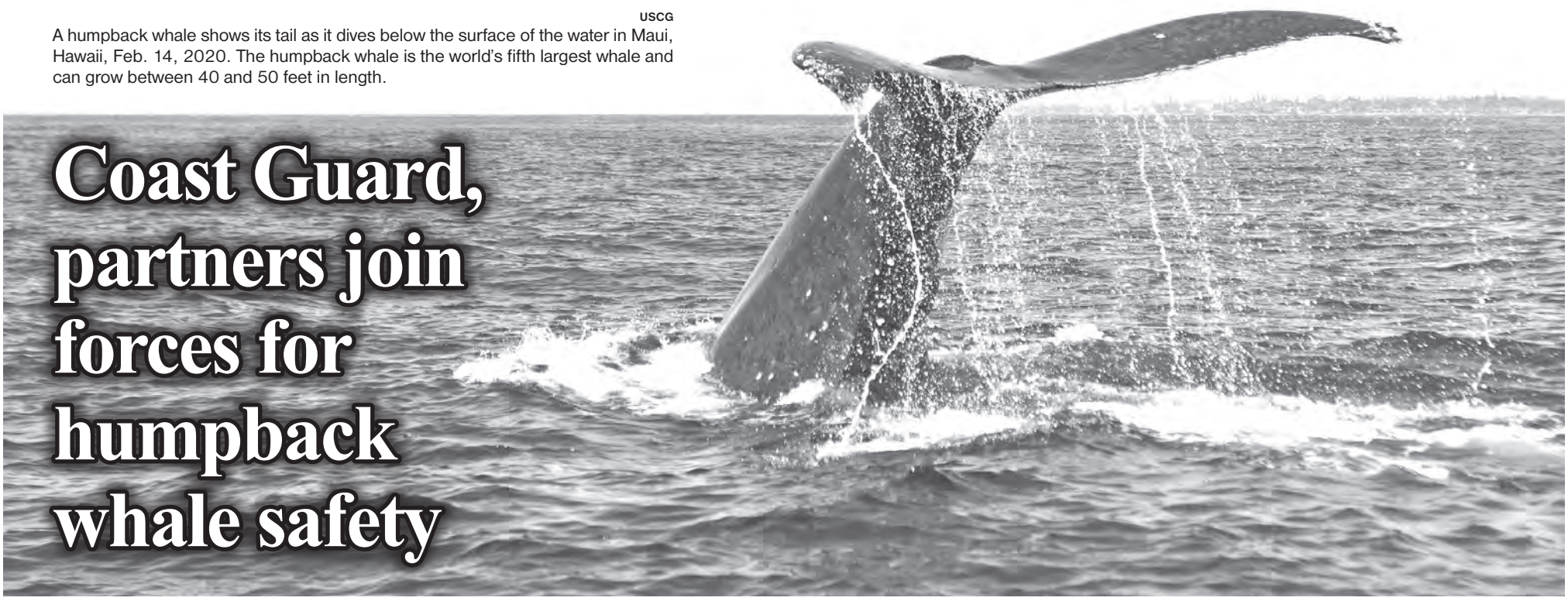
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Pagan Island Land Use Plan.


COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORP.
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS
MOBILE
CLINIC SCHEDULE
for February 2024
Adult Health Check
Feb 28th
• Feb. 28 at Capitol Hill Fire Station from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
Clinical check with provider includes routine wellness exam, physical screening for height and weight, and/or consultation for other concerns. Other community health services: blood pressure check, glucose check, resources & referrals.
Child Health Check
Feb 7th & 23rd
• Feb. 7 at Han Nam Supermarket, Koblerville from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
• Feb. 23 at San Vicente Youth Center from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
For children 0-17 years old. Clinical check with provider includes developmental behavioral assessment, measurement and growth, other health screening, and/or consultation for other concerns.
Women Health Check
Feb 8th & 16th
• Feb. 8 at NAP Office, As Lito from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
• Feb. 16 at Systems of Care, San Antonio from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
Recommended for women who haven't seen a provider in over a year for clinical services: Pap Smears, breast exams, prenatal care, postpartum care, and/or contraceptive counseling and methods
FEBRUARY
IS
HEART HEALTH
AWARENESS
MONTH
WHAT TO BRING:
INSURANCE CARD
(Medicaid and most private insurances accepted)
VALID PHOTO ID
(Driver's license, Passport, Mayor's ID, etc.)
(670) 287-9926/9927/9929
www.chcc.health
@cnmichcc

USCG

A humpback whale shows its tail as it dives below the surface of the water in Maui, Hawaii, Feb. 14, 2020. The humpback whale is the world's fifth largest whale and can grow between 40 and 50 feet in length.



Coast Guard, partners join forces for humpback whale safety

HONOLULU, Hawaii—The U.S. Coast Guard joins partners during Operation Koholƒå Guardian to reduce risk to humpback whales among the Hawaiian Islands, Jan. 1 through March 31, 2024.

U.S. Coast Guard District 14 partners with National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement, and the Hawaii Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement during the humpback whale season around the Hawaiian Islands.

Operation Koholƒå Guardians is a focused mission that occurs during peak whale season, from January to March, that was designed to monitor and protect humpback whales, enforce humpback whale regulations, provide outreach and education to the community, and respond to distressed whales.

Thousands of humpback whales seasonally use the waters around the Hawaiian Islands as their principal breeding and calving wintering grounds. Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is one of 15 National Marine Sanctuaries designated as special areas set aside for long-term protection and conservation and provides extremely important habitat for humpback whales.

USCG

Petty Officer 1st Class Jay Bermudez, a maritime enforcement specialist from Honolulu, watches for vessels that are encroaching too closely to the whale population in Maui, Hawaii, Feb. 14, 2020. The Coast Guard recommends vessels travel at a slow, safe speed in areas where whales are present, and to always maintain a minimum of 100 yards distance from the large mammals.

Mariners and visitors are reminded that the following activities are prohibited and unlawful:

■ A vessel, individual, or drone approaching within 100 yards of any humpback whale.

■ Operating an aircraft within 1,000 feet of any humpback whale, except as necessary for takeoff or landing from an airport or runway.

■ Harassing, hunting, capturing, or killing, or any attempt to do any of these actions, of any humpback whale in the sanctuary.

"Operation Koholƒå Guardian is a shining example of how the Coast Guard, alongside our invaluable partners at NOAA and the Hawaii Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement, effectively safeguard the fragile marine ecosystems of the Hawaiian Islands," said Lt. Cmdr. Nic Iannarone, the chief of enforcement at U.S. Coast Guard Sector Honolulu. "Through collaborative efforts, shared intelligence, and coordinated patrols, we ensure the safety of protected and iconic species like humpback whales, while simultaneously fostering responsible practices amongst ocean users. This collaborative approach is not only crucial for enforcing regulations, but also for educating the public and fostering appreciation for the delicate balance of our marine environment."

If you see a violation or are involved in a collision, call the NOAA hotline at 1-800-853-1964. If a phone call is not possible, hail the Coast Guard on VHF Channel 16. ***(USCG)***

USCG

Petty Officer 1st Class Jay Bermudez, a maritime enforcement specialist from Honolulu, hangs off the port side of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's response boat in search of recreational vessels that may pose a threat to the large concentration of whales off the coast of Maui, Hawaii, Feb. 14, 2020. The Coast Guard encourages vessel operators to stay vigilant while traveling at speed on the water and asks that they keep an eye out for whales at all times in order to avoid potential collisions or accidents.

Coast Guard searching for sailing vessel *Malulani* navigating from LA to Hawaii

USCG

The U.S. Coast Guard is seeking the assistance of the maritime community in the search for the sailing boat *Malulani* Friday afternoon Feb. 2, 2024. The vessel *Malulani* is a 32-foot Westsail sloop that departed Long Beach, California last Dec. 28 enroute to Kaneohe, O'ahu, Hawaii, crewed by the 60-year-old Noel Rubio with a planned arrival date of Jan. 18.

ALAMEDA, Calif.—The U.S. Coast Guard is seeking the assistance of the maritime community in the search for 60-year-old Noel Rubio and the sailing boat *Malulani*.

The vessel *Malulani* is a 32-foot Westsail sloop that departed Long Beach, California, Dec. 28 enroute to Kaneohe, O'ahu, Hawaii, crewed by the 60-year-old Noel Rubio with a planned arrival date of Jan. 18.

The Coast Guard is using all available means to determine the *Malulani*'s location, including urgent marine information broadcasts and harbor checks in California, Hawaii, and Mexico. He last made contact via cellphone Dec. 28, from south of Catalina Island, California informing a friend that he was enroute to Hawaii. The only means of communication aboard the vessel *Malulani* is a VHF-FM marine band radio.

"The Coast Guard is greatly appreciative of the expert consult advice on weather and routes provided by experienced trans-Pacific sailors," said Douglas Samp, a search and rescue mission coordinator in the Rescue Coordination Center Alameda. "Mariners intending to conduct an open ocean passage are highly encouraged to have multiple layers of communication, including a VHF-FM DSC radio, HF DSC radio, satellite communications, and a 406Mhz electronic position indicating radio beacon as the notification of last resort to help SAR authorities locate your position in a time of need."

Please report any information or sightings of the S/V *Malulani* or Noel Rubio to JRCC Alameda at 510-437-3701, RCCAlameda1@uscg.mil or JRCC Honolulu at 808-535-3333, JRCCHonolulu@uscg.mil. ***(USCG)***

Visit to Tinian Public Schools

PSS

Tinian Board of Education member Antonio L. Borja, left, personally welcomed Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho in his first official visit to Tinian public schools on Jan. 24.

PSS

"Hello Dr. Camacho!" Kindergarten pupils greet Dr. Lawrence Camacho during his visit to Tinian Elementary School last week.

PSS

Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho is flanked by Tinian High School's Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps command staff officers. The education chief, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, served the country for over two decades and is a recipient of two Bronze Star medals and the Combat Action Badge, among other awards and decorations. He spoke with JROTC cadets about his decision to serve the community through public education after retiring from the military.

PSS

Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho meets with principal Liz Perzinski after inspecting the school garden at the back of the vast Tinian Middle School and Tinian High School campus.

PSS

Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho speaks with Tinian Middle School students during their physical education activities.

PSS

Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho observes the immersion class at Tinian Middle School.

PSS

Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho, center, is flanked by personnel and staff of Tinian Elementary School, Tinian Middle School, and Tinian High School, led by principals Lou Connie Manglona and Liz Perzinski.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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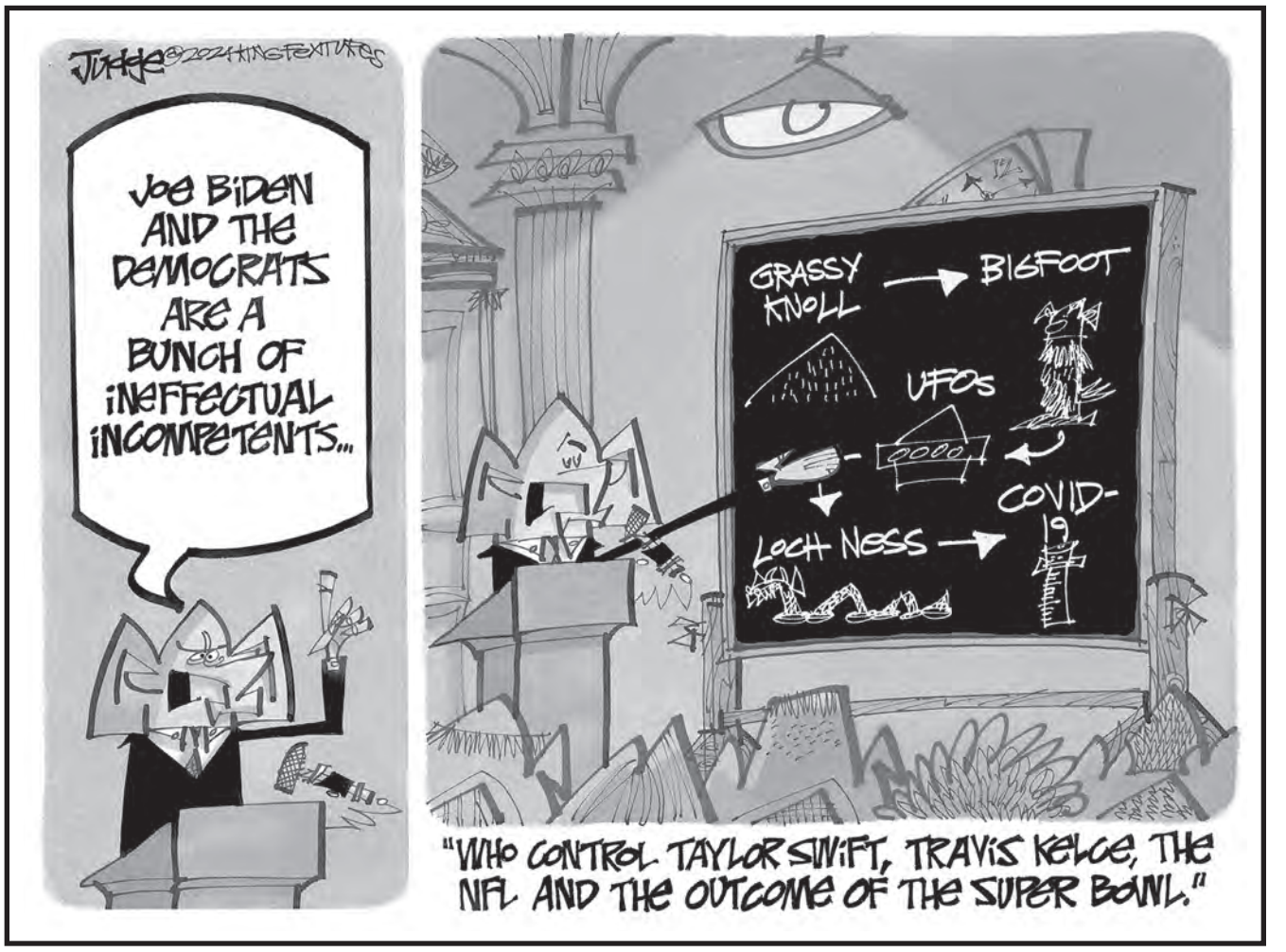

JIMMY ©2024 KING FEATURES
JOE BIDEN AND THE DEMOCRATS ARE A BUNCH OF INEFFECTUAL INCOMPETENTS...
GRASSY KNOLL
BIGFOOT
UFOS
LOCH NESS
COVID-19
"WHO CONTROL TAYLOR SWIFT, TRAVIS KELCE, THE NFL AND THE OUTCOME OF THE SUPER BOWL."

EDITORIAL

Ban TikTok in school? Get rid of phones instead

In response to the inordinate amount of time young Americans spend online, a bipartisan group of lawmakers is pushing to curb students' access to social media sites while at school. The goal of keeping students off TikTok during the school day is undoubtedly worthwhile, but policymakers would be better off taking a simpler and more effective approach: banning mobile phones from schools altogether.

It's by now indisputable that allowing kids to have phones in the classroom harms academic performance—even among those who don't actually use them. Excessive smartphone and social media use have also been linked to rising rates of teenage depression, emotional distress and self-harm. Three-quarters of US public schools claim to prohibit "nonacademic" use of mobile phones during class, but enforcement remains weak. A recent survey found that 97% of US adolescents used their phones at school, with most of it spent on social media, YouTube and gaming platforms.

The problem has finally spurred some in Congress to act. A bill introduced by Texas Senator Ted Cruz would require districts receiving funds through the federal E-Rate program, which subsidizes the cost of broadband connections, to block access to social media platforms over their Wi-Fi networks, just as they already must do for pornography. They'd also have to disclose how much classroom time is spent on screens. Districts that fail to comply would face the loss of federal subsidies—a powerful incentive for schools in high-poverty areas, which rely on E-Rate to cover up to 90% of their internet costs.

Cruz and his cosponsors, Republicans Ted Budd and Shelley Moore Capito and Democrat John Fetterman, deserve credit for trying to prevent taxpayer money from further enabling teens' social media use—especially in the wake of the Federal Communications Commission's decision to allow districts to use E-Rate funds to subsidize Wi-Fi on school buses, which will give kids even more unsupervised time online. But even if it's eventually enacted, the bill won't have much impact on student learning. Only one-third of public schools receive E-Rate funds and would be subject to the mandate. Kids would also still be able to send text messages, watch videos and shop online on their devices. And regardless of how students use their phones, merely being in proximity to them impairs focus and retention, while forcing teachers to waste valuable time policing their use.

Rather than try to control what students do on their phones, policymakers should be focused on removing them entirely. Other countries show it can be done: France, Italy, the UK and China, among others, have imposed nationwide restrictions on mobile phones in schools. US Education Secretary Miguel Cardona should act on the recommendation made by dozens of education researchers and issue an official advisory to school districts calling for an outright ban of phones—and press state-level education chiefs to do the same. State and federal lawmakers should provide financial incentives for districts that implement phone-free policies and increase funding for pouches and lockers to store devices for the duration of the school day. Another bill in the Senate, sponsored by Republican Tom Cotton and Democrat

See BAN on Page 9

Israel's war on Gaza is starving mothers

By GULEER SHAHAB and JILL INDERSTRODT
PROGRESSIVE PERSPECTIVES

Restricting food aid has become a key strategy in Israel's assault on Gaza. With Israel withholding food and water supplies, the 180 mothers who give birth every day in Gaza are starving along with their infants. The most vulnerable in Gaza, including pregnant people, mothers and children, are bearing the brunt of the war.

In early January, South Africa's representatives argued that the International Court of Justice should adopt a legally binding order to compel Israel to cease military operations in Gaza immediately. According to South Africa, Israel's military actions violate the Genocide Convention of 1948, in the process driving Gaza into famine.

> **"The most vulnerable in Gaza, including pregnant people, mothers and children, are bearing the brunt of the war."**

With hospitals shelled beyond functionality, Gazan mothers labor at shelters and in the streets, often enduring C-sections with no painkillers. Those fortunate to deliver in one of the few remaining hospitals are discharged three hours later into a city lacking food, fuel and clean water.

As a health policy scientist focused on the Middle East diaspora and a maternal health researcher, we fear the war's long-term effects on maternal and child health in Gaza. Even when Gazan mothers can carry healthy babies to term, the catastrophic nutritional situation renders new mothers unable to feed their babies. Breastfeeding may help protect against the maternal stress experienced during active conflict that can leave future generations with a higher incidence of mental health conditions. Preventing Gazan moms from breastfeeding will have devastating consequences on the health and well-being of Palestinians for generations.

For Palestinian mothers in crisis, breastfeeding is the safest method of infant feeding. Formula is scarce in emergencies and mothers must mix it with contaminated water, placing infants at risk for illness and even death. Breastfeeding provides safe, convenient nutrition and, in the short term, protects against respiratory illness and diarrhea, both common in emergencies. And in the long term, breastfeeding can protect against asthma, a condition that is more prevalent in populations traumatized by war.

In emergencies like the war in Gaza, breastfeeding allows mothers to bond with their babies and can help prevent the perpetuation of intergenerational trauma. Intergenerational trauma occurs when future generations experience adverse mental health outcomes (like PTSD, anxiety, and depression) because of their parents' or grandparents' traumatic experiences. Although the exact mechanisms are not completely understood, some research shows that breastfeeding may protect against this transmission.

Mothers in Gaza, however, cannot currently access the water and nutrients needed to produce enough breast milk to feed their babies.

Israel has reduced water production in Gaza to less than 3% of normal production, amounting to slightly less than 1 gallon of water per person per day. These dire conditions force families to boil dirty water and sometimes even drink seawater, leading to severe dehydration. Experts anticipate impending cholera and typhoid outbreaks, which will disproportionately kill young children and increase the risk of stillbirth. Reports show that the food entering Gaza meets less than 7% of the population's minimum caloric needs, meaning Gazan women lack the 2,000-2,800 calories needed per day to breastfeed.

Some will argue that Biden's hands are tied, and that the United States must maintain its alliance with Israel. But the American public disagrees. On Jan. 13, 400,000 Americans marched on Washington, D.C., against Biden's support of Israel's war. For a president whose administration claims to support women's health through reproductive, maternal and women's health research initiatives, the decision to ignore the 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza certainly does not align with the White House's purported values.

The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza has the potential to spread throughout the region. The International Court of Justice must listen to South Africa, and the provisional measure demanding that Israel suspend military operations. The mothers of Gaza need a ceasefire now.

Guleer Shahab is a health policy scientist, Kurdish activist, and Public Voices Fellow with the OpEdProject in partnership with AcademyHealth. Jill Inderstrodt is a maternal health researcher Affiliated Scientist with the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University, and a Public Voices Fellow with the OpEdProject. This column was produced for Progressive Perspectives, a project of The Progressive *magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

What you need to know about the origins of Black History Month

Editor's note: This article by former AP reporter Jesse J. Holland was originally published on Feb. 2, 2017.

By JESSE J. HOLLAND
Associated Press

Black History Month is considered one of the nation's oldest organized history celebrations, and has been recognized by U.S. presidents for decades through proclamations and celebrations. Here is some information about the history of Black History Month.

How did Black History Month start?

It was Carter G. Woodson, a founder of the Association for the Study of African American History, who first came up with the idea of the celebration that became Black History Month. Woodson, the son of recently freed Virginia slaves, who went on to earn a Ph.D in history from Harvard, originally came up with the idea of Negro History Week to encourage Black Americans to become more interested in their own history and heritage. Woodson worried that Black children were not being taught about their ancestors' achievements in American schools in the early 1900s.

"If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated," Woodson said.

Why is Black History Month in February?

Woodson chose February for Negro History Week because it had the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Lincoln was born on Feb. 12, and Douglass, a former slave who did not know his exact birthday, celebrated his on Feb. 14.

Daryl Michael Scott, a Howard University history professor and former ASAAH president, said Woodson chose that week because Black Americans were already celebrating Lincoln's and Douglass's birthdays. With the help of Black newspapers, he promoted that week as a time to focus on African-American history as part of the celebrations that were already ongoing.

The first Negro History Week was announced in February 1926.

"This was a community effort spearheaded by Woodson that built on tradition, and built on Black institutional life and structures to create a new celebration that was a week long, and it took off like a rocket," Scott said.

Why the change from a week to a month?

Negro History Week was wildly successful, but Woodson felt it needed more.

Woodson's original idea for Negro History Week was for it to be a time for student showcases of the African-American history they learned the rest of the year, not as the only week Black history would be discussed, Scott said. Woodson later advocated starting a Negro History Year, saying that during a school year "a subject that receives attention one week out of 36 will not mean much to anyone."

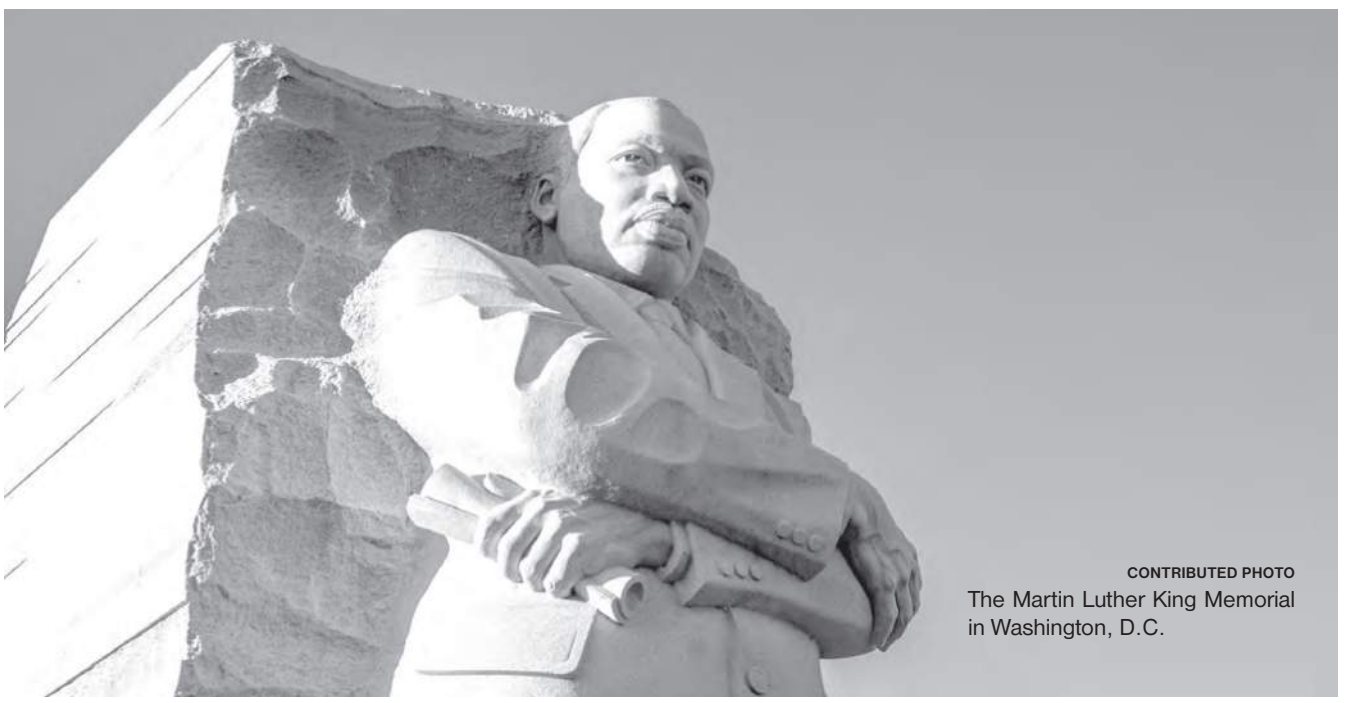
Individually several places, including West Virginia in the 1940s and Chicago in the 1960s, expanded the celebration into Negro History Month. The civil rights and Black Power movement advocated for an official shift from Black History Week to Black History Month, Scott said, and, in 1976, on the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Negro History Week, the Association for the Study of African American History made the shift to Black History Month.

Presidential recognition

Every president since Gerald R. Ford through Joe Biden has issued a statement honoring the spirit of Black History Month.

Ford first honored Black History Week in 1975, calling the recognition "most appropriate," as the country developed "a healthy awareness on the part of all of us of achievements that have too long been obscured and unsung." The next year, in 1976, Ford issued the first Black History Month commemoration, saying with the celebration "we can seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

President Jimmy Carter added in 1978 that the celebration "provides for all Americans a chance to rejoice and express pride in a heritage that adds so much to our way of life." President Ronald Reagan said in 1981 that "understanding the history of Black Americans is a key to understanding the strength of our nation."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Martin Luther King Memorial in Washington, D.C.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Some thoughts on placing power lines to CHC underground

Placing power lines from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. power plant underground to the Commonwealth Health Center appears to be justified based on what happened during the recent super typhoons. All of us recall that the overhead power lines, essentially all along Pale Arnold Road, were damaged and thus no power to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. could be delivered.

Is placing the power lines underground to CHC the best solution? It will not prevent power outages as CHC will still be dependent on CUC's power plant for its power.

A few thoughts:

■ The cause of the power poles being knocked down was in large part due to flying debris, specifically corrugated tin. Tin roofing flew off poorly constructed homes and/or abandoned buildings, which got tangled with the power lines. When this happens, the tangled debris on the power lines behaves like a sail on a sailboat, adding tremendous additional force to the already strong winds.

Require that homes be designed and constructed to withstand typhoon conditions. We need to insist that all structures be built to resist typhoon conditions. We know that we will be hit by another super typhoon. Enforce the *building codes. it is a lot more cost effective than to put power lines underground.*

■ Upgrade the generator(s) at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. so that CHC will be capable of generating 100% of its power needs. Put in additional generators to ensure that power will always be available.

Placing power underground is very expensive, both, during construction and afterwards as heavy maintenance will be required.

Efrain Camacho
Navy Hill, Saipan

Black History Month

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired e who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. H net practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

The father of Black History Month is Carter G. Woodson, who was born in 1875 in Virginia to formerly enslaved parents. After graduating from college he became a school supervisor in the Philippines. He became the second Black American, after W.E.B. Du Bois, to obtain a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He died in 1950.

The first Black American poet focused on is Gwendolyn Brooks born in 1917 and died in 2000. She was a Pulitzer Prize winner and poet laureate of Illinois. Her poem here is the subject of a recent 2022 film, *Till*. She wrote the poem in 1960.

Emmet Louis Till was an African American boy who was abducted, tortured, and lynched in Mississippi in 1955 at the age of 14, after being accused of offending a white woman, Carolyn Bryant, in her family's grocery store.

The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmet Till

(after the murder, after the burial)

Emmet's mother is a pretty-faced thing;
the tint of pulled taffy
She sits in a red room,
drinking black coffee.
She kisses her killed boy.
And she is sorry.
Chaos in windy grays
through the red prairie."

BAN

From page 8

Tim Kaine, would authorize $5 million a year to pay for phone-storage equipment—a good start, though likely not enough to cover all schools' needs.

After years of inaction, it's encouraging to see some national leaders begin to address the damage inflicted by mobile technology on student learning. But bolder action is still needed to start solving the problem for good.

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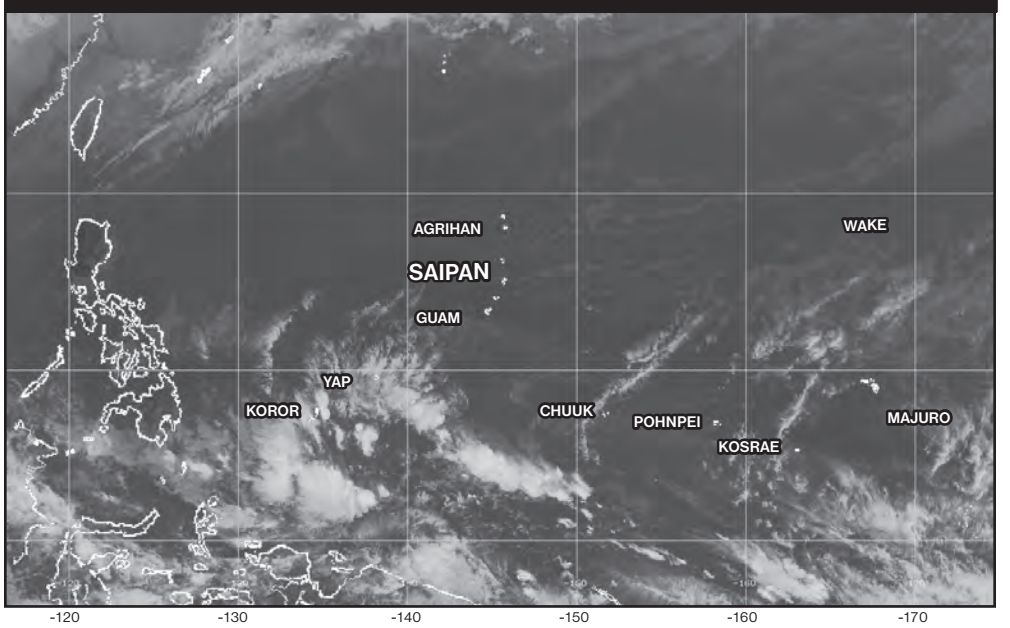
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East to northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East to northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.
86 / 76°	86 / 76°	86 / 76°	86 / 76°	86 / 76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:10 AM MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite indicates a few spotty showers approaching the Marianas from the east, otherwise just patchy clouds over the region. Surface winds are fresh to strong and still gusty at Saipan. The Ipan Buoy showed combined seas in the 9 to 10 foot range with occasionally larger waves. Saipan Buoy shows seas in the 7 to 8 foot range from the northeast and some longer-period waves from the north.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 79°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°
Yap	Cloudy	84° / 79°
Chuuk	Sunny	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Sunny	84° / 78°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	84° / 80°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	83° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:45 AM	6:17 PM
Wednesday	6:44 AM	6:17 PM
Thursday	6:44 AM	6:17 PM
Friday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	6:18 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:59 AM	2:19 PM	-
Wednesday	4:01 AM	3:21 PM	-
Thursday	5:02 AM	4:27 PM	-
Friday	6:01 AM	5:34 PM	-
Saturday	6:54 AM	6:40 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Sunny	75° / 61°
Beijing	Fair	37° / 27°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	69° / 65°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 64°
London	Showers	48° / 39°
Los Angeles	Cloudy	65° / 52°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 72°
Melbourne	Sunny	93° / 63°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78° / 66°
New York	Fair	47° / 31°
Osaka	Cloudy	50° / 39°
Paris	Showers	50° / 43°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	48° / 30°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	61° / 50°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	69° / 47°
San Francisco	Cloudy	42° / 22°
Seoul	Rain	52° / 37°
Tokyo	Rain	44° / 38°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	53° / 33°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
6:24 AM	High Tide	1.49
10:42 AM	Low Tide	1.24
3:22 PM	High Tide	1.58
11:20 PM	Low Tide	-0.44

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3461	2:40PM	6:45PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3462	11:15PM	1:30PM+1	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Terry's Snack Bar in CK now open on Saturdays

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

CHRYSTAL MARINO
Terry's Snack Bar in Chalan Kanoa.

CHRYSTAL MARINO
Theresita "Bolis" Pertudo and LeiRussel Pertudo pose for a photo at Terry's Snack Bar in Chalan Kanoa.

CHRYSTAL MARINO
LeiRussel Pertudo serves customers at Terry's Snack Bar in Chalan Kanoa.

In an ever-advancing world, things change quick, but some don't, like the recipes at Terry's Snack Bar, aka "Bolis" in Chalan Kanoa, which continues to produce the classic empanadas, donuts, and kelaguen that taste the same way our mothers and grandmothers remember.

This time, though, the snack bar has upgraded their storefront and, after a couple months of renovation, announced that they will now also be open on Saturdays.

Snack bar owner Theresita "Bolis" Pertudo, whom everyone calls Terry, told *Saipan Tribune* that they are usually open only on weekdays, from 6am to 4pm. Recently, though, she wanted to try opening on Saturdays as well, and so beginning 6:30am last Saturday, the snack bar was open and served until 2pm.

Pertudo, who prefers to be referred to as Bolis, recounts that she began Terry's Snack Bar alongside her late first husband, Herman "Bolis" Pangelinan, and father-in-law Jose Masga Dela Cruz, and they would serve the favorite snacks of kids. Since then, over 40 years have passed, and she is now serving the children and grandchildren of her once-young customers.

After countless struggles, and even when the business had to close due to damage from typhoons, the business presses on, and Bolis said she wants to continue serving people with the same classic recipes they remember.

Bolis added that some of her long-time customers who are no longer able to go to the store would still send their children to buy snacks, and they could tell if they were eating her goods or another person's.

"They really know the taste," she said.

The snack bar is known for their empanadas, donuts, chicken kelaguen, and other snacks (all ranging from $1 to $3), but they also sell hot lunches and soups. So if you want a blast from the past, an affordable snack, or just a friendly conversation with Aunty Terry while snacking, check out Terry's Snack Bar across the William S. Reyes Elementary School in Chalan Kanoa.

Keeping kids safe on social media: What parents should know to protect their kids

By BARBARA ORTUTAY
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

Social media CEOs got grilled by Senate lawmakers this week in an emotional and often heated hearing about the dangers their platforms pose to children—sexual predators, videos encouraging suicide and glorifying eating disorders, bullying and addictive features, just to name a few.

Republican and Democratic senators came together in a rare show of agreement throughout the hearing, though it's not yet clear if this will be enough to pass legislation such as the Kids Online Safety Act or other proposed measures intended to protect kids from online harms.

Even with apparent bipartisan unity, making laws and regulating companies takes time. What are parents—and teens—supposed to do in the meantime? Here are some tips on staying safe, communicating and setting limits on social media—for kids as well as their parents.

IS 13 THE MAGIC AGE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA?

There's already, technically, a rule that prohibits kids under 13 from using platforms that advertise to them without parental consent: The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act that went into effect in 2000—before today's teenagers were even born.

The goal was to protect kids' online privacy by requiring websites and online services to disclose clear privacy policies and get parents' consent before gathering personal information on their kids, among other things. To comply, social media companies have generally banned kids under 13 from signing up for their services, although it's been widely documented that kids sign up anyway, either with or without their parents' permission.

But times have changed, and online privacy is no longer the only concern when it comes to kids being online. There's bullying, harassment, the risk of developing eating disorders, suicidal thoughts or worse.

For years, there has been a push among parents, educators and tech experts to wait to give children phones—and access to social media—until they are older, such as the "Wait Until 8th" pledge that has parents sign a pledge not to give their kids a smartphone until the 8th grade, or about age 13 or 14. Some wait even later, like 16 or 17.

But neither social media companies nor the government have done anything concrete to increase the age limit.

IF THE LAW WON'T BAN KIDS, SHOULD PARENTS?

"There is not necessarily a magical age," said Christine Elgersma, a social media expert at the nonprofit Common Sense Media. But, she added, "13 is probably not the best age for kids to get on social media."

The laws currently being proposed include blanket bans on the under-13 set when it comes to social media. The problem? There's no easy way to verify a person's age when they sign up for apps and online services. And the apps popular with teens today were created for adults first. Companies have added some safeguards over the years, Elgersma noted, but these are piecemeal changes, not fundamental rethinks of the services.

"Developers need to start building apps with kids in mind," she said.

Some tech executives, celebrities such as Jennifer Garner and parents from all walks of life have resorted to banning their kids from social media altogether. While the decision is a personal one that depends on each child and parent, some experts say this could lead to isolating kids, who could be left out of activities and discussions with friends that take place on social media or chat services.

Another hurdle—kids who have never been on social media may find themselves ill-equipped to navigate the platforms when they are suddenly allowed free rein the day they turn 18.

TALK, TALK, TALK

Start early, earlier than you think. Elgersma suggests that parents go through their own social media feeds with their children before they are old enough to be online and have open discussions on what they see. How would your child handle a situation where a friend of a friend asks them to send a photo? Or if they see an article that makes them so angry they just want to share it right away?

For older kids, approach them with curiosity and interest.

"If teens are giving you the grunts or the single word answers, sometimes asking about what their friends are doing or just not asking direct questions like, 'What are you doing on Instagram?' but rather, 'Hey, I heard this influencer is really popular,'" she suggested. "And even if your kid rolled their eyes it could be a window."

Don't say things like "Turn that thing off!" when your kid has been scrolling for a long time, says Jean Rogers, the director of the nonprofit Fairplay's Screen Time Action Network.

"That's not respectful," Rogers said. "It doesn't respect that they have a whole life and a whole world in that device."

Instead, Rogers suggests asking them questions about what they do on their phone, and see what your child is willing to share.

Kids are also likely to respond to parents and educators "pulling back the curtains" on social media and the sometimes insidious tools companies use to keep people online and engaged, Elgersma said. Watch a documentary like "The Social Dilemma" that explores algorithms, dark patterns and dopamine feedback cycles of social media. Or read up with them how Facebook and TikTok make money.

"Kids love to be in the know about these things, and it will give them a sense of power," she said.

SETTING LIMITS

Rogers says most parents have success with taking their kids' phones overnight to limit their scrolling. Occasionally kids might try to sneak the phone back, but it's a strategy that tends to work because kids need a break from the screen.

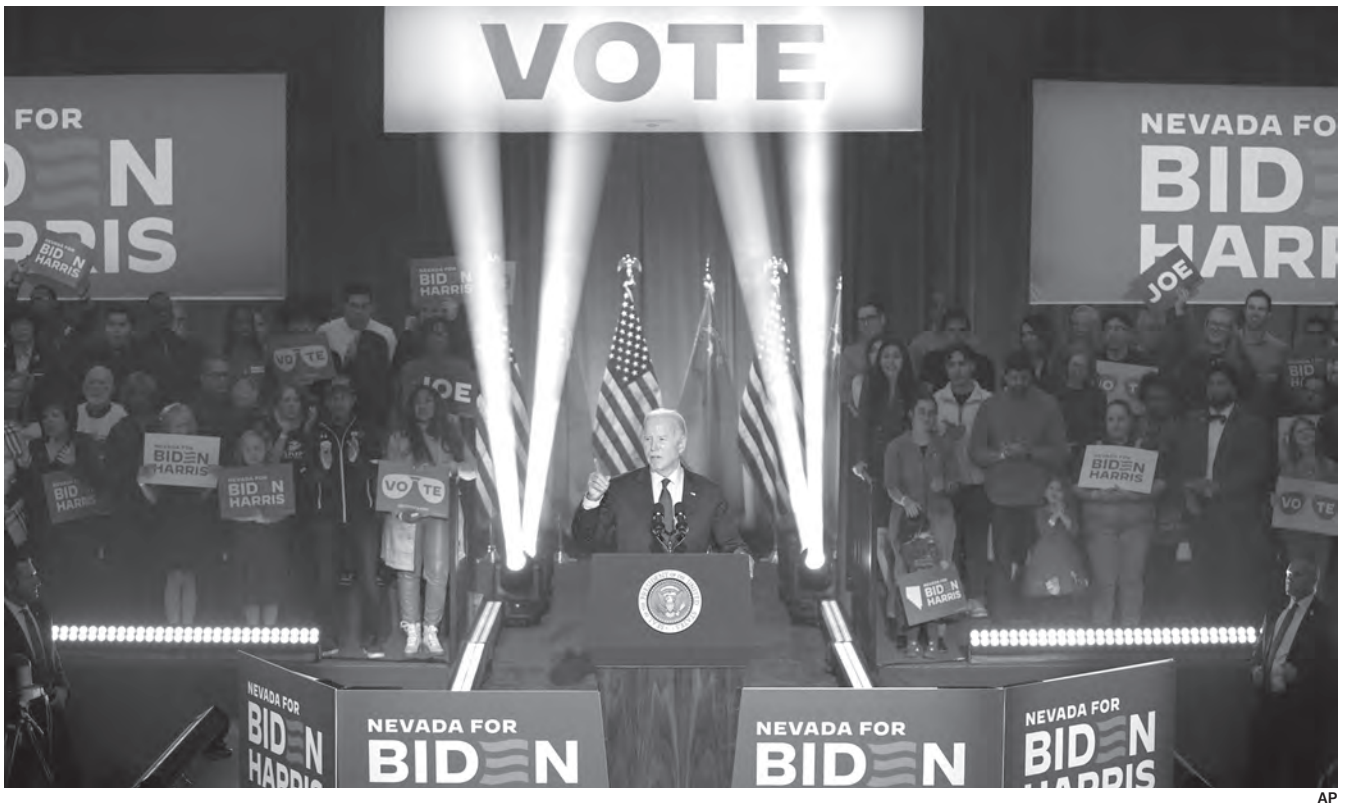
"They need to an excuse with their peers to not be on their phone at night," Rogers said. "They can blame their parents."

Nation

IF TRUMP SHOULD WIN

Biden warns of 'nightmare' future for country

» Proceeds to list reasons why



AP

President Joe Biden speaks at a campaign event Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024, in North Las Vegas, Nev.

LAS VEGAS (AP)—President Joe Biden on Sunday ticked through a list of reasons he says a second Donald Trump presidency would be a "nightmare" for the country as he urged Nevada Democrats to vote for him in the state's presidential primary this week and for his party at large in November.

Biden opened a campaign swing with a fundraiser where he focused on Trump's ample history of provocative statements—his description of Jan. 6 rioters as "hostages," his musing about a former top military officer deserving execution, his branding of fallen soldiers as "suckers" and "losers," his wish to be a Day One "dictator," his vow to supporters that "I am your retribution," and more.

Then it was on to a community center in a predominantly Black section of Las Vegas, where he told his crowd of several hundred that "you're the reason we'll make Donald Trump a loser again."

Biden said the stakes were huge when he took on Trump in 2020—"what made America America, I thought, was at risk'—and they are even larger now as a likely rematch looms.

He told donors at the private home in Henderson, Nevada, that if they came to Washington, he'd show them the White House dining room table where Trump, according to ex-aides, sat transfixed for hours in front of the TV as the rioters he'd fired up with his rhetoric stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

"We have to keep the White House," he said., "We must keep the Senate" and win back the House.

Accomplish that, he said, and "we can say we saved American democracy."

He was equally blunt in talking up his record at his subsequent rally where he implored voters to "imagine the nightmare of Donald Trump."

Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung responded in kind, saying Biden "has been a nightmare for this country in just three short years in the White House, and no amount of gaslighting will make Americans forget about all the misery and destruction he has brought."

In Tuesday's Nevada Democratic presidential primary, Biden faces only token opposition from author Marianne Williamson and a few relatively unknown challengers. He won Nevada in November 2020 by fewer than 3 percentage points. But he came to Nevada to rouse voters for the fall campaign as well.

The state known largely for its casino and hospitality industries is synonymous with split-ticket, hard-to-predict results. It has a transient, working-class population and large Latino, Filipino and Chinese American and Black communities . Nevada has a stark rural-urban divide, with more than 88% of active registered voters—and much of its political power—in the two most populous counties, which include the Las Vegas and Reno metro areas.

In 2022, Democrats successfully defended their Senate seat and lost the governor's office. The six constitutional officers elected statewide are split evenly among Democrats and Republicans.

The narrow victory of Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto helped Democrats party keep control of the Senate for the remainder of Biden's current term.

Working in Biden's favor this year is the vast Democratic operation built by the late Sen. Harry Reid. The "Reid Machine" has for years trained operatives and retained organizers and is partially why, despite Nevada's status as a purple state, Democrats have won every presidential election here since 2008.

But early signs show Biden could have more ground to make up than in past races. Voters are largely dissatisfied with the likely Biden-Trump rematch. A New York Times/Siena poll from November put Biden's approval rating at 36% in Nevada.

"I know from my reelection, the issues that matter to Nevadans are still those kitchen table issues," Cortez Masto said in an interview.

Biden has built his reelection campaign around the theme that Trump presents a dire threat to U.S. democracy and its founding values. The president also has championed the defense of abortion rights, recently holding his first big campaign rally, in Virginia, where the issue energized Democrats who won control of the state's House of Delegates.

Biden also promotes his handling of the economy, arguing that his policies have created millions of jobs, combated climate change and improved American competitiveness overseas. But polls suggest many voters aren't giving his administration credit.

The Democratic National Committee recently announced a six-figure ad buy in Nevada and South Carolina, where Biden won the leadoff primary Saturday. The ads are meant to boost enthusiasm among Black, Asian American and Latino voters statewide, including radio, television and digital ads in Spanish, Chinese and Tagalog, and a billboard in Las Vegas' Chinatown.

GOP governors back at Texas border to keep pressure on Biden over migrant crossings

EAGLE PASS, Texas (AP)—As more than a dozen Republican governors gathered Sunday on the Texas border, Kyle Willis was across the river in Mexico considering his next move to enter the U.S.

The 23-year-old Jamaican, who said he left his country after facing attacks and discrimination due to his sexuality, had followed the path of a historic number of migrants over the past two years and tried crossing the Rio Grande at the border city of Eagle Pass. But he waded back across the river after spending hours, in soaking clothes, failing to persuade Texas National Guard soldiers behind a razor wire fence to let him through.

"It's not just something they're saying to deter persons from coming in. It's actually real," said Willis, who for now is staying at a shelter in Piedras Negras.

His experience would be considered a victory for Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who returned to Eagle Pass on Sunday surrounded by GOP governors who have cheered on his extraordinary showdown with President Joe Biden's administration over immigration enforcement. But declines in crossings are part of a complex mix of developments along the U.S. border, including heightened enforcement in Mexico. Meanwhile, migrants are moving further down the river and crossing elsewhere.

The issue was also at the forefront in Washington, where senators on Sunday raced to release a highly-anticipated bill that pairs border enforcement policy with wartime aid for Ukraine.

Abbott said he would continue expanding operations along the Texas border but did not provide details. For nearly a month, Texas has restricted U.S. Border Patrol's access to an area along the river known as Shelby Park, accusing the Biden administration of not being tough enough on crossings.

"We are here to send a loud and clear message that we are banding together to fight to ensure that we will be able to maintain our constitutional guarantee that states will be able to defend against any type of imminent danger," Abbott said.

The record number of border crossings is a political liability for President Joe Biden and an issue that Republicans are eager to put front and center to voters in an election year. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis last week committed to send more National Guard troops to Texas and other governors are also weighing new deployments.

Although DeSantis wasn't present Sunday in Eagle Pass, Abbott was joined by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders of Arkanas and Gov. Bill Lee of Tennessee, among other Republicans.

Eagle Pass is where Texas has been locked in a power struggle with the Biden administration for the past month after the state began denying access to U.S. Border Patrol agents at Shelby Park.

Crossings in recent weeks are down overall along the entire U.S. border, including areas without such a heavy security presence.

Claims that Jan. 6 rioters are 'political prisoners' endure

WASHINGTON (AP)—While sentencing a North Carolina man to prison for his role in the U.S. Capitol riot, a Republican-appointed judge issued a stark warning: Efforts to portray the mob of Donald Trump's supporters as heroes and play down the violence that unfolded on Jan. 6, 2021, pose a serious threat to the nation.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth condemned the depiction by Trump and Republican allies of Jan. 6 defendants as "political prisoners" and "hostages." Lamberth also denounced attempts to undermine the legitimacy of the justice system for punishing rioters who broke the law when they invaded the Capitol.

"In my 37 years on the bench, I cannot recall a time when such meritless justifications of criminal activity have gone mainstream," Lamberth, an appointee of President Ronald Reagan, wrote in a recent ruling. The judge added he "fears that such destructive, misguided rhetoric could presage further danger to our country."

As Trump floats potential pardons for rioters if he returns to the White House, judges overseeing the more than 1,200 Jan. 6 criminal cases in Washington's federal court are using their platform to try to set the record straight concerning distortions about an attack that was broadcast live on television. A growing number of defendants appear to be embracing rhetoric spread by Trump, giving defiant speeches in court, repeating his false election claims and portraying themselves as patriots.

During a recent court hearing, Proud Boys member Marc Bru repeatedly insulted and interrupted the judge, who ultimately sentenced him to six years in prison. "You can give me 100 years and I'd do it all over again," Bru said.

At least two other rioters shouted "Trump won!" in court after receiving their punishment.

World

US warns of further retaliation if Iran-backed militias continue attacks

JERUSALEM (AP)—After a weekend of retaliatory strikes, the United States on Sunday warned Iran and the militias it arms and funds that it will conduct more attacks if American forces in the Mideast continue to be targeted, but that it does not want an "open-ended military campaign" across the region.

"We are prepared to deal with anything that any group or any country tries to come at us with," said Jake Sullivan, President Joe Biden's national security adviser. Sullivan said Iran should expect "a swift and forceful response" if it—and not one of its proxies—"chose to respond directly" against the U.S.

Sullivan delivered the warnings during a series of interviews with TV news shows after the U.S. and Britain on Saturday struck 36 Houthi targets in Yemen. The Iran-backed militants have fired on American and international interests repeatedly in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war.

An air assault Friday in Iraq and Syria targeted other Iranian-backed militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in retaliation for the drone strike that killed three U.S. troops in Jordan last weekend. The U.S. fired again at Houthi targets on Sunday.

"We cannot rule out that there will be future attacks from Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria or from the Houthis," Sullivan said. He said the president has told his commanders that "they need to be positioned to respond to further attacks as well."

The U.S. has blamed the attack at the Tower 22 base in Jordan on Jan. 28 on the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a coalition of Iranian-backed militias. Iran has tried to distance itself from the drone strike, saying the militias act independently of its direction.

Biden "is not looking for a wider war," Sullivan said, when questioned about the potential for strikes inside Iran that would expand the conflict in the volatile region. But when asked about the possibility of direct escalation by the Iranians, he said: "If they chose to respond directly to the United States, they would be met with a swift and forceful response from us."

While pledging to respond in a "sustained way" to new assaults on Americans, Sullivan said he "would not describe it as some open-ended military campaign."

Still, he said, "We intend to take additional strikes and additional action to continue to send a clear message that the United States will respond when our forces are attacked or our people are killed."

There will be more steps taken, he said. "Some of those steps will be seen. Some may not be seen."

The U.S. attack on dozens of sites in Iraq and Syria hit more than 85 targets at seven locations. These included command and control headquarters, intelligence centers, rockets and missiles, drone and ammunition storage sites and other facilities that were connected to the militias or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force, the expeditionary unit that handles Tehran's relationship with, and arming of, regional militias.

The Biden administration has so far appeared to stop short of directly targeting Iran or senior leaders of the Quds Force within its borders.

The U.S. military does not have any confirmation at this time of civilian casualties from those strikes, Sullivan said. "What we do know is that the targets we hit were absolutely valid targets from the point of view of containing the weaponry and the personnel that were attacking American forces. So, we are confident in the targets that we struck."

Some of the militias have been a threat to U.S. bases for years, but the groups intensified their assaults in the wake of Israel's war with Hamas following the Oct. 7 attack on Israel that killed 1,200 people and saw 250 others taken hostage. More than 27,000 people have been killed by Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza, the territory's Health Ministry has said,

The Houthis have conducted almost daily missile or drone attacks against commercial and military ships transiting the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and they have made clear that they have no intention of scaling back their campaign despite a new international force to protect vessels in the vital waterway.

India begins to flex its naval power as competition with China grows

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—For decades, India has focused its defense policy on its land borders with rivals Pakistan and China. Now, as its global ambitions expand, it is beginning to flex its naval power in international waters, including anti-piracy patrols and a widely publicized deployment close to the Red Sea to help protect ships from attacks during Israel's war with Hamas.

India sent three guided missile destroyers and reconnaissance aircraft in November when Yemen-based Houthi rebels began targeting ships in solidarity with Hamas, causing disruptions in a key trading route that handles about 12% of global trade.

The deployment highlights the country as a "proactive contributor" to international maritime stability, said Vice Adm. Anil Kumar Chawla, who retired in 2021 as head of India's southern naval command.

"We are not doing it only out of altruism. Unless you are a maritime power you can never aspire to be a global power," Chawla said. India, already a regional power, is positioning itself "as a global player today, an upcoming global power," he said.

India is widely publicizing the deployments, signaling its desire to assume a wider responsibility in maritime security to the world and its growing maritime ambitions to regional rival China.

"It is a message to China that, look, we can deploy such a large force here. This is our backyard. Though we don't own it, but we are probably the most capable and responsible resident naval power," Chawla said.

The Indian navy has helped at least four ships, three of which were attacked by Houthi rebels and another that Washington blamed on Iran, a charge denied by Tehran. It has also conducted several anti-piracy missions.

Iran-backed Houthi rebels have targeted dozens of ships in the Red Sea, saying they are seeking a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip. The U.S. and its allies have responded with multiple rounds of bombings of rebel positions. India has not joined the U.S.-led force battling the Houthis.

WORLD BRIEFS

Shelling kills at least 28 at bakery in Russian-occupied Ukraine, Moscow-installed officials say

Ukrainian shelling killed at least 28 people at a bakery in the Russian-occupied city of Lysychansk, Moscow-installed officials said. At least one child was among the dead Saturday, local leader Leonid Pasechnik wrote in a statement on Telegram. A further 10 people were rescued from under the rubble by emergency services, he said. Ukrainian officials in Kyiv did not comment on the incident. Both Moscow and Kyiv have increasingly relied on longer-range attacks this winter amid largely unchanged positions on the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line in the nearly 2-year-old war. However, Ukrainian forces have come under intense Russian attack over the past 24 hours, with continuous assaults along the front line, Ukraine's General Staff said in a statement Sunday. Fighting has been particularly fierce in the eastern city of Avdiivka, where Moscow is attempting to encircle Kyiv's troops, while Ukrainian forces have also been on the defensive in Kupiansk, Lyman, Bakhmut and Zaporizhzhia, officials said. One civilian was killed and two injured in a Russian artillery strike in the frontline town of Toretsk, less than 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) from Bakhmut, said Donetsk regional governor Vadym Filashkin.

Forest fires rage on in central Chile, killing at least 112 people over 3 days

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)—Firefighters wrestled Sunday with massive forest fires that broke out in central Chile two days earlier, as officials extended curfews in cities most heavily affected by the blazes and said at least 112 people had been killed.

The fires burned with the highest intensity around the city of Viña del Mar, where a famous botanical garden founded in 1931 was destroyed by the flames Sunday. At least 1,600 people were left without homes. Several neighborhoods on the eastern edge of Viña del Mar were devoured by flames and smoke, trapping some people in their homes. Officials said 200 people were reported missing in Viña del Mar and the surrounding area. The city of 300,000 people is a popular beach resort and also hosts a well-known music festival during the southern hemisphere's summer.

UN expert says more needs to be done to address human rights abuses in the Philippines

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The government of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has taken steps to address human rights abuses in the country, including the killings of journalists and rights activists, a U.N. expert said Friday. However, more needs to be done, she said, including ensuring accountability. The remarks by United Nations Special Rapporteur Irene Khan came at the end of a nearly two-week visit—at the invitation of the government—to assess rights conditions in the Philippines, where she met with officials and activists, as well as a detained journalist. Khan said she underscored the need for the Marcos administration to seek justice for rights victims under his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte. Watchdog groups had described Duterte's term as a "human rights calamity" due to widespread violations, including the killings of thousands of mostly poor suspects in a brutal anti-drugs crackdown. The International Criminal Court is investigating the killings as a potential crime against humanity. "These are all positive signals, but they are not sufficient to turn the page decisively on the past," Khan said at a news conference in Manila.

In Loving Memory
Jean Cushnie Sakovich
To all our friends in the Marianas,
Thank you very much for all your
unconditional love and support
Aloha, Hafa Adai and Big Hugs
Bill (Mr), Anneka and Jon

Overdrive

How perfect is the 2024 Aston Martin DB12? Very

By LARRY PRINTZ
Tribune News Service

ASTON MARTIN/TNS

The 2024 Aston Martin DB12.

Romance is dead. The idea of refined, beautiful things is a notion that's been replaced by a post-industrial aesthetic that has utterly ruined product design. It's as if every design is meant to challenge our notion of beauty rather than endorse it. It's as if corporate America wants us to accept items we once threw away as something beautiful or useful. It doesn't matter if it's distressed denim, a mangy old barn door repurposed as a bathroom door or automobile design that takes its cues from video games. All new design is devised to shock or abuse our sense of beauty.

It's no wonder that Ralph Lauren's design vision, one that embraces the greatness of traditional American design, remains so incredibly popular and widely accepted. Or that sports car maker Aston Martin, and its adherence to traditional sports cars values, remains so beloved worldwide?

That's what makes the 2024 Aston Martin DB12 one of the world's great sports cars.

But Aston Martin would prefer you call it a super tourer, and while you might think this is merely an exercise in semantics, they're not wrong.

If the DB12 looks familiar, it should. It comes from a long line of Aston Martin DB sports cars, a series that dates to the 1948 Aston Martin 2-liter Sports, now known as the DB1. For 2024, the 75th anniversary of the DB1, the DB12 arrives looking much like its predecessor, the DB11. And indeed, it does wear the DB11's doors and borrows the DBS' roof. But look closely and you'll see changes. The DB12's front end is higher than before and sports a larger grille. The headlamps have been redesigned, as has the front splitter and side mirrors. But those changes are subtle enough that you can be forgiven for not noticing. And look closely at its footwear. It's the first car in the fitted with Michelin's new Pilot Sport 5S tires.

Its panels cloak the same bonded and riveted aluminum architecture as before, but Aston Martin has gone to work to make it 7 percent stiffer than before. Its track is now 0.2 inches wider up front and 0.9 inches wider in the rear. The automaker has also tended to its suspension, which is all-new and features the latest adaptive dampers, electronic power assisted steering and an electronic rear differential—and the results are impressive.

But before we get to that, let's look at what's under the hood.

You might be expecting to find a V12—but you'd be wrong. Worldwide government dictates have consigned this power plant to history. In its place is a Aston-Martin-revised Mercedes-AMG twin-turbocharged 4.0 V8 engine that produces 671 horsepower and 590 pound-feet of torque. That's an increase of 34 percent from the DB11. All that power flows to the rear wheels through an eight-speed ZF gearbox. That's good enough to run 0-60 mph in 3.5 seconds on its way to a 202-mph top speed. The driveline includes five driving modes: GT, Sport, Sport+, Individual, and, for the first time, Wet.

Hop in the car and you'll find much the DB11's perfect driving position remains intact. So too are the power seat switches on the side of the center console. The placement is less than ideal for those with longer legs. Bracing your leg against the center console inadvertently moves the seats, as I discovered to my dismay. And yeah, you could grouse against the miniscule trunk. But this is a sports car—um—make that super tourer. If you need more space, pack lighter or look elsewhere. This car is about high speed, not voluminous luggage capacity.

NUTS & BOLTS

- **Base price**: $245,000
- **Engine**: Twin-turbocharged 4.0-liter V8
- **Horsepower/Torque**: 671/590 pound-feet
- **EPA fuel economy (city/highway)**: 14/22 mpg
- **Fuel required**: Premium
- **Length/Width/Height**: 186/78/51 inches
- **Ground clearance**: 4.7 inches
- **Cargo capacity**: 9.3 cubic feet
- **Towing capacity**: Not rated

But there's much to like about the center stack, which has been reworked from the DB11. Gone are the round push-buttons for the transmission atop the center of the instrument panel. Instead, a toggle shifter is standard, much like those used on other European cars. Particularly welcome is the revised 10.25-inch infotainment touchscreen, as Aston Martin finally replaces the old Mercedes-Benz COMAND system it's been using for years. It comes with a standard Bowers & Wilkins audio system. It resides alongside a 10.25-inch digital instrument cluster. Together with the revised instrument panel design, the DB12 has a modern interior that matches its incomparable looks. Now, if they would only install this setup in their DBX 707 SUV.

We had a chance to sample the 2024 Aston Martin DB12 for the first time at The Concours Club, an automotive country club near Miami in the Miami-Opa Locka Executive Airport. It proved the perfect place to try out Aston's newest speed machine, as it features a driving circuit more than 2 miles long. As tracks go, it's fairly narrow and technical, but a whole mess of fun in a car that's even more so.

The DB11 is certainly a grand touring car rather than a sports car. In other words, while it could go fast, comfort was nearly as important as velocity. It's not that the DB12 can't play that part. It can, beautifully. But far more importantly, switching it into Sport+ mode reveals the DB12 to also be every bit the hyper car you want to track.

Hammering the throttle down The Concours Club's 2,100-foot straightaway, the Aston Martin's howls with a knowing menace well into triple-digit speed. The steering is linear, quick and direct, and the car carves through corners without a trace of wallow, eager to follow the driver's orders. Drifting? It's a snap, as this car easily rotates around bends exactly as you like. It's very easy to maintain control, and it's clearly communicative.

It possesses a lively burliness and intensity missing from the DB11, making the term super tourer more than justified. And much like Superman becomes Clark Kent, so too does the DB12 revert to being just another good-looking, nattily-dressed supermodel once off the track. It almost seems like a solid upstanding citizen, but we know the truth. It stakes out the space between hardcore sports cars like the Ferrari Roma and Porsche 911 Turbo, and grand tourers like the Bentley Continental GT.

And that makes the perfect proposition in a high-dollar sporting driving machine.

2024 Hyundai Kona AWD a generational improvement

By MARC D. GRASSO
Boston Herald

Hyundai has become a significant part of families across the country due to their rightly priced vehicles with great factory warranties. With an array of vehicles fit for every member of the family, the Hyundai Kona surfaces in 2024 with a larger and more capable vehicle than ever.

Wrapped in Denim Blue Pearl, the 2024 Hyundai Kona Limited AWD shows out in Grasso's Garage very nicely. Its small frame and compact-like size have a lot of value for the buck.

NUTS & BOLTS

- **MSRP**: $33,150
- **MPG**: 24 city / 29 highway / 28.0 as tested
- **As Tested**: $34,695

The ever-popular and proven 1.6-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine produces 190 horsepower or 147 with the 2.0-liter option. Both engine options are paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters. The HTRAC all-wheel drive system also surfaces on the Kona as in past models and is nicely utilized for those drivers who battle winters with snow. This powertrain combination manufactured commuter-like fuel mileage, and on our test we attained 28 mpg consistently.

MARC GRASSO

The 2024 Hyundai Kona.

On the interior, we noticed a 12.3-inch infotainment system with navigation and connectivity. The seats were very spacious and roomy. The second-generation Hyundai Kona, which rolled out in 2023, has received a new front and rear fascia, and a hybrid version has been added to the fleet. Overall the Kona has grown 5.9 inches and 2.4 inches in length to the wheelbase.

The Hyundai Kona serves its fleet and customers congruently. It's a well-priced entry-level SUV that resembles the Hyundai Sante Fe on the interior while having a smaller hatchback style storage without the price and truck bed. As the Kona is larger than the previous generation, and still smaller than the Tucson, the Kona is the 2nd smallest SUV in the fleet, but easily the biggest bang for the buck.

Life & Style

Taylor Swift announces new album while accepting Grammy

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Forget her "Reputation." Taylor Swift has a whole new album coming out.

Accepting the Grammy for best pop vocal album, Taylor said she'd been keeping a secret for two years.

"My brand-new album comes out April 19. It's called The Tortured Poets Department. I'm going to go and post the cover right now backstage," she announced.

And so she did.

On her Instagram, Swift posted a black-and-white image of her reclining across pillows. The top half of her face and lower half of her legs are cut off in the low-contrast image.

AP

Taylor Swift accepts the award for best pop vocal album for "Midnights" during the 66th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024, in Los Angeles.

"All's fair in love and poetry..." her caption read. In a little over an hour, the Instagram post alone had amassed nearly 7 million likes.

"And so I enter into evidence / My tarnished coat of arms / My muses, acquired like bruises / My talismans and charms / The tick, tick, tick of love bombs / My veins of pitch black ink," read what appeared to be handwritten lyrics posted after the album cover.

Swift had provoked mass speculation earlier in the night when her site seemed to go down. Some theorized she was gearing up to release "Reputation (Taylor's Version)," but cryptic clues on the "crashed" site indicated that might be a misdirect.

And so it was.

The site's back up now, focused around the upcoming album, with preordering and merchandise options. This will be Swift's 11th studio album, not counting her re-recordings. Her last original album was "Midnights," released in October 2022. Since then, she's launched the billion-dollar Eras Tour and released "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)" and "1989 (Taylor's Version)."

Swift was accepting the Grammy for "Midnights" when she made the surprise announcement. As she walked the red carpet, she paid homage to her album title, donning a choker with a small clock embedded. And yes, the time was set to the midnight—even if the viewer had to tilt their head to see the hands pointing to "12."

While a nod to the album—and reminiscent of the "tick, tick, tick" in "The Tortured Poets Department" post—the watch seemed particularly apt, given the superstar's seemingly packed schedule over the next week. Swift is set to head back out on her Eras Tour this week, performing for four nights in Tokyo. She still will be able to make it back to the U.S. later in the week to catch her boyfriend Travis Kelce playing in the Super Bowl.

Victoria Monét wins best new artist at the Grammys

By ELISE RYAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Singer-songwriter Victoria Monét won best new artist at the 66th annual Grammy Awards.

Monét, 34, won the category against Gracie Abrams, Fred Again.., Noah Kahan, Ice Spice, Jelly Roll, Coco Jones and The War and Treaty. She emerged as a frontrunner early —and reigned in The Associated Press' Grammy predictions—as the only best new artist nominee also nominated in one of the top three general field categories: record of the year.

Monet

The best new artist award, which went to jazz artist Samara Joy last year, is one of the Grammys' most-anticipated as it is often seen as a bellwether for future success. Recent winners include Olivia Rodrigo, Megan Thee Stallion, Billie Eilish and Dua Lipa. Other winners include Mariah Carey, Alicia Keys, John Legend, Amy Winehouse, Adele and Chance the Rapper.

The award goes to an artist who releases, during that year's eligibility period, the first recording that establishes their "public identity," according to the Grammys. For Monét, a longtime songwriter for other artists including Ariana Grande and Chloe x Halle, that was her debut solo album: "Jaguar II." The album's breakout hit, "On My Mama" peaked at number 35 on the Billboard Hot 100 and was named one of the best of 2023 by The Associated Press.

Killer Mike detained by police at the Grammys

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Killer Mike was detained at the Grammy Awards on Sunday after the rapper and activist won three Grammy awards including his first in more than two decades.

In a video posted by the trade website The Hollywood Reporter, Mike was escorted in handcuffs by Los Angeles police at Crypto.com Arena after some joyous moments for him at the Grammys' Premiere Ceremony on Sunday, where he won his awards in quick succession.

Police spokesperson Officer Mike Lopez said Mike being detained stemmed from an altercation inside the arena around 4 p.m.

A representative for Mike did not immediately respond to emails or text messages requesting a comment.

"The only thing that limits your age is not being truthful about your age or what you're doing," the 48-year-old Mike said backstage. He won for best rap performance, rap song and rap album.

'Argylle' flops with $18M for big-budget Apple release

NEW YORK (AP)—Apple has had its first box office flop.

"Argylle," the $200-million star-studded spy thriller from Apple Studios, debuted with $18 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. The film, directed by Matthew Vaughn, managed to lead the weekend box office, but still found little interest from moviegoers.

Although Apple has been in the original film business since 2019 and won the Oscar for best picture with 2021's "CODA," the company has only recently produced its own lineup of big-budget releases. The first two—Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" and Ridley Scott's "Napoleon"—could be called successful.

"Killers of the Flower Moon," though not profitable with $156 million in global sales, was one of the most celebrated films of 2023 and is nominated for 10 Academy Awards. "Napoleon," released in November, has raked in $219 million worldwide—also not enough to turn a profit. But both films raised Apple's reputation as a home to top directors and prestige filmmaking.

The same can't be said for "Argylle," a twisty thriller starring Bryce Dallas Howard, Sam Rockwell and Henry Cavill. The movie was badly dinged by critics, who gave it a Rotten Tomatoes score of 35% "fresh." Ticket buyers also gave it a thumbs down, with a C+ CinemaScore.

Husband's detour into drug abuse may be grounds for divorce

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married for three years, together for eight. We have two kids together. Over the last year, he has changed a lot and has treated me very badly. He's always frustrated with me, accusing me of not caring about him and things of that nature. He puts me down by saying I think I'm a good person but I'm not.

I noticed the changes in him and suspected he might be having an affair or using drugs. It turns out that he has been using drugs. I told him from the beginning that if he touched this certain drug, I would show him the door. He finally admitted the truth, but only because his older brother told me and he had no choice. He had a great job, which he quit after he refused a drug screen. I'm so upset and hurt by his lies and the drug abuse. He has been moved out for a little over a week now and hasn't even asked about the kids. Do you think this is grounds for a divorce, or should I try to help him through his addiction and let him come back home?

ADDICT'S WIFE IN TEXAS

DEAR WIFE: Is your husband still jobless? Has he told you that he loves you and wants to come back? Is he willing to join a support group and get help for his addiction? If the answers are no, then please realize that the only person responsible for overcoming his addiction is himself, not you. And yes, I think this may be grounds for divorce—unless you want those children living under the same roof with a verbally abusive drug addict who shows no interest in them.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I love my father, but I'm sick of trying so hard with him. When we used to spend time together, he would ignore me if I spoke but respond if my husband said the same thing right after me. If he did act like he heard me, he'd just grunt or act disinterested in what I said.

Now, if I try to contact him, he doesn't answer my calls or texts, and I feel like I'm bothering him. If I don't contact him, he tells everyone I "never call" and that I keep my kids from seeing him. Lately, he has been spreading a rumor that I went into his house and stole family items. His house has an alarm and stays locked up. (I also live several hundred miles away.)

He refuses counseling and denies any responsibility for conflicts in his relationships. I'm tired of the emotional anguish and games. My mom, who divorced him decades ago, wants me to keep trying because she cherished her relationship with her own now-deceased father so much. Do I honor my mother and keep trying? Or should I put my foot down and let my mother know I refuse to be abused this way?

CAN'T WIN IN TENNESSEE

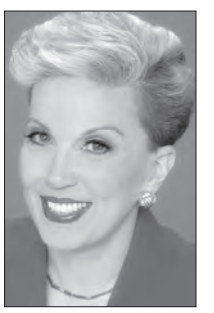
DEAR CAN'T WIN: Your mother was smart enough to get away from your father, whose behavior is abusive. Explain to her (it's surprising she hasn't already noticed) that your relationship with him is diametrically opposed to the one she enjoyed with her own father. It's unfortunate that the relationship you have with your dad isn't healthy for you, and it certainly won't benefit your children to see you treated the way he has been treating you. So if you're asking my permission to keep your distance from your father, you have it.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

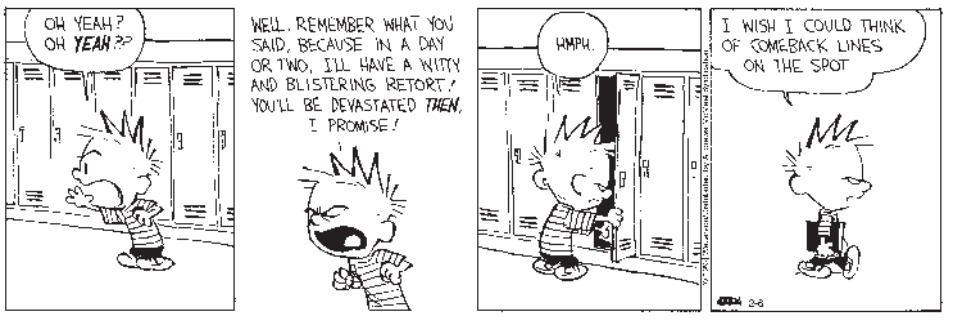


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

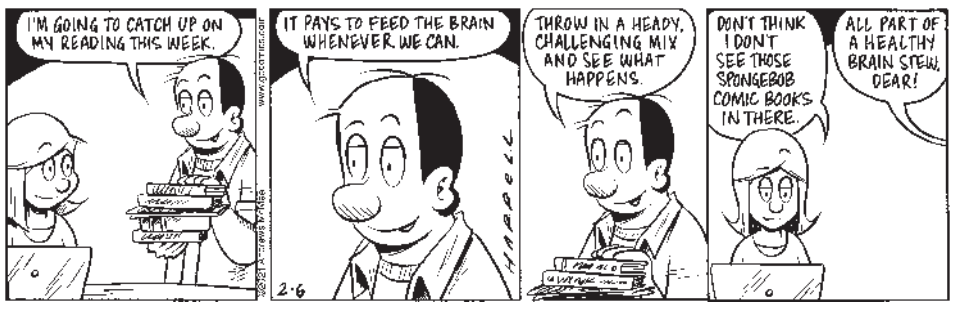

OH YEAH? OH YEAH?!
WELL, REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID, BECAUSE IN A DAY OR TWO, I'LL HAVE A WITTY AND BLISTERING RETORT! YOU'LL BE DEVASTATED THEN, I PROMISE!
HMPH.
I WISH I COULD THINK OF COMEBACK LINES ON THE SPOT

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

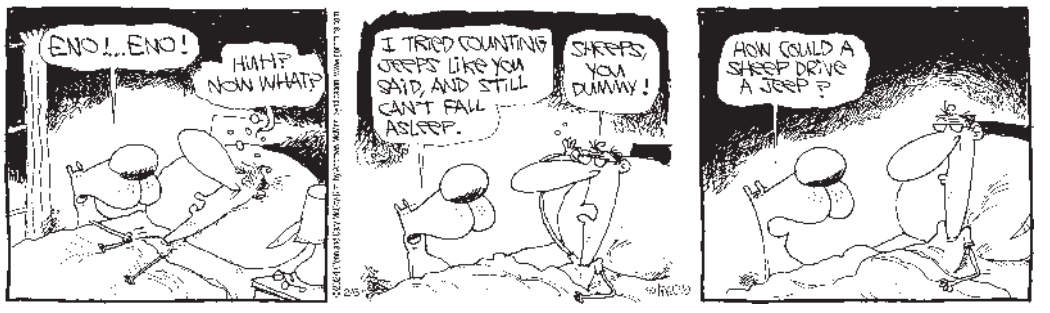
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


I'M GOING TO CATCH UP ON MY READING THIS WEEK.
IT PAYS TO FEED THE BRAIN WHENEVER WE CAN.
THROW IN A HEADY, CHALLENGING MIX AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.
DON'T THINK I DON'T SEE THOSE SPONGEBOB COMIC BOOKS IN THERE.
ALL PART OF A HEALTHY BRAIN STEW, DEAR!
2-6

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


ENO!..ENO!
HUH? NOW WHAT?
I TRIED COUNTING JEEPS LIKE YOU SAID, AND STILL CAN'T FALL ASLEEP.
SHEEPS YOU DUMMY!
HOW COULD A SHEEP DRIVE A JEEP?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Campus digs
5 Order partner
8 Plane-related
12 Bailiwick
13 "— Clear Day"
14 Small combo
15 Home buyer's need, at times
17 Freeway exit
18 Very long time
19 Loud sounds
21 Appears
24 Zhivago's love
25 Summit
26 Supremes hit song
30 Illustrations
31 UPS rival
32 Diane's role in "The Godfather"
33 City transit routes
35 Party cheese
36 Winds up
37 Complains
38 California motto
41 Lass
42 Slope transport
43 "Enter the Dragon" actor
48 Actress Campbell
49 Felon's flight
50 Lopsided win
51 Saharan
52 Type squares
53 Monster

DOWN
1 Apply cream
2 "... man — mouse?"
3 Stimpy's pal
4 Brat's dare
5 Lake bird
6 Santa — winds
7 Hopefuls
8 Like part of the heart
9 Historic times
10 Frost
11 "I'm a klutz!"
16 — Angeles
20 African antelope
21 Swedish auto
22 Off-white
23 911 responders
24 Stows cargo
26 Like Gumby
27 Gumbo need
28 Futile
29 Checks out
31 Snitch
34 Glanced sideways
35 Ravel composition
37 Buddy
38 Sicilian volcano
39 Taxi alternative
40 Sitarist Shankar
41 Mouth parts
44 Zodiac animal
45 Journal
46 Where Lux. is
47 Summer on the Seine

Solution time: 22 mins.

J	A	R		S	T	R	A	P		R	A	P
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T	R	I	P	L	E	S	E	C		I	S	L
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M	A	I	F	E	L		M	A	R	C		
I	W	O		D	I	D		T	A	H	O	E
C	O	N	T		S	O	Y		S	C	R	B
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I	D	U	N	N	O		D	N	A			
D	A	B		T	E	X	A	S	T	E	C	H
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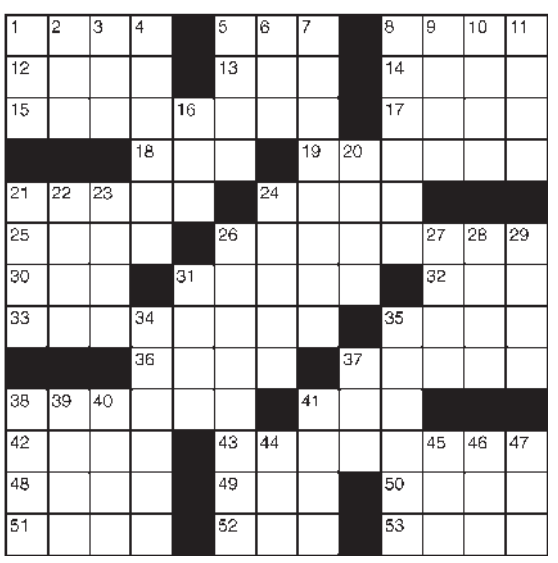
A	S	K		L	E	V	E	H		H	O	G

Yesterday's answer 2-6



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Rick Astley, 58; Axl Rose, 62; Kathy Najimy, 67; Tom Brokaw, 84.

Happy Birthday: Take a leadership position and follow your instincts. Be the one who influences others to do what's right. Push truth, integrity and kindness by setting an excellent example for those tempted to put money and power before justice and fair play. Use your intelligence to develop innovative ideas. Show gratitude, humility and moderation, and you'll outshine any competition. Change begins with you. Your numbers are 4, 10, 17, 24, 31, 38, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Embrace like-minded people, organizations you trust and charitable events you endorse. Be careful when dealing with health or activities that put you at risk. Choose solid investments and avoid emotional or unnecessary purchases for services or subscriptions that you'll never use. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: You must be astute if you plan to make the right decision. Mixed emotions and incomplete data will make it difficult for you to envision the possibilities. If you have doubts, step back. It's better not to jeopardize your reputation, position or income. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: Dodge anyone trying to push you in a skeptical direction. Rely on what and who you know, not outside influences trying to take you from your cash. Look for hidden costs before you commit to anything that requires signing contracts or shared expenses. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: Leap forward. The timing is right to launch your plans. No more talking; actions will get you where you want to go. It's time to put all your hard work, education and experience to the test and to reap the rewards you deserve. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Explain your position and stand your ground. Don't let anyone disrupt your plans or tarnish your reputation. Discuss issues and offer solutions that target the source. Sugarcoating a situation will not help you reach your goal. Demonstrate how you plan to move forward. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Keep making moves until you are satisfied with the results. Don't waffle when it's up to you to bring about change. Gather information that will keep you updated with what's trending and within reach. Self-improvement will lead to personal gains. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Take notes, tally up what's possible and be picky when faced with a joint endeavor or financial gamble. Hard work will pay off, and research will save you from a loss. Use your insight and accountability to navigate your way to a better place. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Weigh the pros and cons before you proceed. Consider who is advantageous and who will hold you back. Balance and integrity will be your best ways forward. Refuse to let emotions, power or money lead you in the wrong direction. An offer will lack substance. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Refuse to let anyone's rhetoric fluster you or entice you with fake facts. Don't invest in someone or something when you should support your efforts. When in doubt, take a pass and watch from the sideline. Focus on becoming the best version of yourself. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: Donating or buying into someone else's dream won't get you ahead financially. Make your money work for you. Put time and energy into something you believe in, and hone your skills to fulfill your pursuits. Make a fruitful change, not one that leads to debt. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Listen, evaluate and fact-check before you participate or commit to something that has appeal but lacks substance. Make your voice heard, network, do whatever you can to gather evidence and pin down what's true. Say no to a lofty sales pitch. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Go to the source if you want the truth. Prepare to fight for what you want, and align yourself with people who share your sentiments. You'll attract money, power and culprits eager to take advantage of you. Put reason first. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are articulate, caring and generous. You are enthusiastic and proud.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			6		2	8		1
9				7		2	3	
	7	8			5		6	4
7								
6	2	3				5	9	8
5				6	8			
	9	7		1	6	3	8	
8		5					1	7
1	3			8			5	9

Difficulty: ★★ 2/6

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	5	4	7	8	2	9	1	3
2	3	9	4	5	1	6	8	7
8	1	7	9	6	3	2	5	4
1	7	6	2	9	4	8	3	5
9	8	2	1	3	5	4	7	6
3	4	5	8	7	6	1	9	2
4	6	8	5	1	7	3	2	9
7	9	3	6	2	8	5	4	1
5	2	1	3	4	9	7	6	8

Difficulty: ★ 2/5

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

HENRY KISSINGER (1923-2023) **Solution: 10 letters**

B	C	R	E	L	L	E	F	E	K	C	O	R	C	T
H	I	O	G	U	G	G	E	N	H	E	I	M	Ⓐ	N
A	T	P	M	N	P	F	A	C	U	L	T	Y	Ⓘ	E
R	D	E	A	M	O	R	A	B	E	V	R	E	Ⓢ	M
V	O	H	B	R	I	P	E	U	N	Y	C	N	Ⓐ	N
A	C	T	N	A	T	S	I	S	S	A	O	A	S	R
R	T	S	A	A	Z	I	S	H	I	I	U	T	E	E
D	O	Y	I	N	Z	I	S	I	T	D	E	I	L	V
I	R	N	L	E	N	N	L	A	O	T	E	O	C	O
P	A	A	P	B	I	E	I	E	N	N	D	N	I	G
L	L	M	R	O	X	T	L	E	T	W	A	A	T	A
O	F	R	I	L	O	N	T	I	H	A	V	L	R	S
M	R	E	Z	G	N	E	A	M	E	R	I	C	A	N
A	E	G	E	T	D	E	T	A	T	S	D	R	O	F
T	D	N	E	C	N	E	G	I	L	L	E	T	N	I

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Alfred, American, Anneliese, Articles, Asia, Assistant, Bipartisan, Bush, Captain, Change, Commission, David, Detente, Diplomat, Doctoral, Elizabeth, Faculty, Ford, Germany, Globe, Government, Guggenheim, Harvard, Heinz, Intelligence, Nancy, National, Negotiations, Nixon, Presidents, Prize, Rockefeller, Serve, State, Wars

Yesterday's Answer: Los Angeles

To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 66 through 76, order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Beal scores 43 points in Washington return to help Suns rout Wizards

WASHINGTON (AP)—Bradley Beal scored a season-high 43 points in his return to Washington and the Phoenix Suns routed the Wizards 140-112 on Sunday.

Beal played 11 seasons before being dealt to Phoenix last offseason. He received a video tribute and standing ovation during player introductions before the game. Then he scored 26 points in the first half.

He had 41 after three quarters and then exited for good with 8:44 to play.

Kevin Durant and Jusuf Nurkic scored 18 points apiece for Phoenix, and Devin Booker had 14. The Suns went 4-3 on a seven-game trip.

Deni Avdija had 24 points for the Wizards. They were without Kyle Kuzma because of left shoulder soreness.

AP

Phoenix Suns guard Bradley Beal gestures after he made a 3-point basket during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Washington Wizards, Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024, in Washington.

CLIPPERS 109, HEAT 95

MIAMI (AP)—Kawhi Leonard had 25 points and 11 rebounds, James Harden scored 16 of his 21 points in the second half and Los Angeles beat Miami.

Harden flirted with a triple-double, finishing with 11 assists and eight assists. Norman Powell scored 16 points and Paul George added 11 for the Clippers.

Los Angeles is 25-5 since the start of December—by far the best record in the NBA over that span.The Clippers improved to 5-1 in their seven-game, 11-day trip.

Jimmy Butler scored 21 points and Terry Rozier finished with 17 for the Heat. They have lost eight of their last 10.

CELTICS 131, GRIZZLIES 91

BOSTON (AP)—Jayson Tatum scored 34 points before sitting out the final quarter and NBA-leading Boston Celtics cruised past injury-depleted Memphis.

Coming off a disappointing loss Thursday night against a Los Angeles Lakers team missing LeBron James and Anthony Davis, the Celtics faced a squad with only eight available players because 13 were on the injury report.

Kristaps Porzingis added 26 points to help the Celtics improve to 23-3 at TD Garden. Boston was without All-Star forward Jaylen Brown because of a back injury.

Scotty Pippen Jr. led Memphis with 19 points.

THUNDER 135, RAPTORS 127, 2OT

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Josh Giddey scored 24 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 23 and Oklahoma City overcame a 23-point deficit to beat Toronto in double-overtime.

Chet Holmgren and Lu Dort each added 22 points and Aaron Wiggins had 20 to help Oklahoma City improve to 35-15. The Thunder tied a team record with 23 3-pointers on 63 attempts.

RJ Barrett led Toronto with 23 points. Scottie Barnes, Jakob Poeltl and former Thunder guard Dennis Schroder each scored 19 points. The Raptors made 14-of 35 3-pointers.

NUGGETS 112, TRAIL BLAZERS 103

DENVER (AP)—Nikola Jokic scored 29 points, Jamal Murray added 21 points and 10 assists and Denver Nuggets rallied past short-handed Portland for thier second victory the Trail Blazers in 48 hours.

The Nuggets didn't trail by more than a basket in their 120-108 win over Portland on Friday night, also at Ball Arena, but didn't lead this one until the final seconds of the third quarter when Jokic's finger-roll layup broke an 84-84 tie.

Deandre Ayton led Portland with 27 points. Anfernee Simons had 26.

JAZZ 123, BUCKS 108

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Lauri Markkanen scored 21 points and Utah overcame a 19-point deficit to beat Milwaukee.

Keyonte George had 19 points and 10 rebounds and Collin Sexton also scored 19 points to help the Jazz snap a three-game losing streak.

Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Bucks with 33 points, 13 assists, and seven rebounds. Bobby Portis added 27 points. Milwaukee dropped to 1-3 since Don Rivers took over as coach for the fired Adrian Griffin.

TIMBERWOLVES 111, ROCKETS 90

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Anthony Edwards scored 22 of his 32 points in the third quarter, Rudy Gobert had 17 points and 13 rebounds and Minnesota beat Houston.

The Timberwolves have won five of seven and the victory earned coach Chris Finch the nod to coach the Western Conference in the All-Star game.

Gobert added four of Minnesota's season high-tying 11 blocks. Karl-Anthony Towns had 14 points and 10 rebounds.

Alperen Sengun had 15 points and 10 rebounds for Houston.

PACERS 115, HORNETS 99

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Pascal Siakam had 25 points, nine assists and eight rebounds and Indiana overcame a career-high 35 points from Hornets rookie Brandon Miller to beat Charlotte and snap a three-game skid.

Aaron Nesmith added 22 points and Myles Turner had 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Pacers. Tyrese Haliburton had 17 points in 20 minutes while remaining on a minutes restriction due to a lingering hamstring injury.

Miller finished 10 of 25 from the field, 10 of 12 from the foul line and had five 3s for the Hornets. P.J. Washington added 22 points. Charlotte has lost seven straight.

MAGIC 111, PISTONS 99

DETROIT (AP)—Franz Wagner scored 27 of his 38 points in the second half and Orlando beat Detroit for its third straight victory.

Paolo Banchero added 20 points for Orlando.

Cade Cunningham and Jaden Ivey each scored 18 points for Detroit. The NBA-worst Pistons dropped to 6-43.

76ers' Embiid set for procedure to fix lateral meniscus in left knee

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Joel Embiid can forget about winning a second NBA MVP award.

The 76ers can only hope Embiid can make some sort of recovery and return this season from the procedure he's set to undergo this week to correct an injury to the lateral meniscus in his left knee.

The 76ers did not say on Sunday night how much time Embiid was expected to miss. Philadelphia should have a clear idea on Embiid's recovery timetable after the surgery.

But there is no doubt, given the nature of the injury, that Embiid should be expected to miss a significant amount of time.

Embiid was named an Eastern Conference starter for the NBA All-Star Game later this month, the seventh time in his career he made the team. The 76ers have a three-game homestand this week that opens Monday against Dallas, only the start of an extended absence for a team that has slumped without him—the 76ers are 4-10 without Embiid this season.

Winner of two straight NBA scoring titles, Embiid hurt his left knee Tuesday night in a loss to the Golden State Warriors. He had already been hampered by knee injuries this season that cost him considerable time. He has missed 14 games this season, all but ending his chances of being eligible for a second straight MVP award. The new collective bargaining agreement requires players, in most instances, to play in 65 regular-season games to be eligible for awards such as MVP or the All-NBA teams.

When healthy, Embiid has continued to perform at an MVP level. He is the NBA's leading scorer at 35.3 points per game and is averaging 11.3 rebounds and 5.7 assists. He scored a franchise-record 70 points to go along with 18 rebounds on Jan. 22 in a 133-124 victory over San Antonio.

"We had some shaky performances," 76ers coach Nick Nurse said last week. "Then we kind of got in a groove and had some good ones. We got a bunch of good road wins without him. We kind of knew, we've got to be able to survive without him."

The 76ers are 30-18 and in fifth place in the Eastern Conference with two games left before Thursday's NBA trade deadline.

Embiid said last month he wasn't concerned with another MVP. He just wanted to help the 76ers win their first NBA championship since 1983.

"I've already done it," Embiid said. "If I have a chance to get a second one, I'll do it. I'm not going to force myself or push for it. My game is always going to speak for itself. We're winning. That's the main thing. We've got to keep winning and you put in the stats to be in the (MVP) conversation that's great, too. But at the end of the day, if there's something going on, and I can't meet the requirement for the amount of games played to qualify for that, then so be it."

Embiid leads the NBA with three 50-point games this season, while his nine 40-point games also leads the league.

NBA BRIEFS

Grizzlies plan to retire Marc Gasol's No. 33 jersey later this season

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—The Memphis Grizzlies plan to retire Marc Gasol's No. 33 jersey during their April 6 game against the Philadelphia 76ers. Gasol played for the Grizzlies from 2008-19 and remains the franchise's all-time leader in minutes played (25,917), starts (762), baskets (4,341), free throws made (2,701), defensive rebounds (4,624), total rebounds (5,952) and blocks (1,135). He ranks second in franchise history in games played (769), points (11,684), assists (2,639), offensive rebounds (1,318), double-doubles (194) and triple-doubles (5). He's third in steals (708). He was named the NBA's defensive player of the year in 2012-13, becoming the first European to win that award. The center from Spain was a first-team all-NBA selection in 2014-15, making him the only player in franchise history to receive that honor. Gasol appeared in three All-Star Games and was a second-team all-NBA pick in 2012-13. Gasol last played in the NBA in 2020-21 and announced his retirement this week. He spent most of his career in Memphis but also played for the Toronto Raptors and Los Angeles Lakers. Gasol will become the second player in franchise history to have his jersey number retired. Zach Randolph's No. 50 was retired on Dec. 11, 2021.

Doc Rivers' first win as Bucks coach means he'll lead East All-Stars after huge rally to beat Mavs

DALLAS (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo looked up in slight amazement when told Doc Rivers had just clinched coaching in the All-Star Game. Seems the reaction had more to do with Rivers being the Milwaukee star's coach for exactly three games than the 25-point rally that secured the bid for Rivers and the Bucks' staff.

Antetokounmpo scored 48 points and the Bucks overcame the big first-half deficit for their first victory under Rivers, beating the Dallas Mavericks 129-117 on Saturday night. "He's going to coach the game?" a wide-eyed Antetokounmpo said after going 20 of 28 from the field with 10 of Milwaukee's 34 assists. Rivers, who lost his first two games after the mid-season firing of first-year coach Adrian Griffin, was slightly less than amused about leading the Eastern Conference All-Stars on Feb. 18. Boston has the best record in the East two weeks before the game, but Joe Mazzulla is ineligible after coaching the game last year. So the Bucks and their second-best record get the nod. "It's ridiculously bad. It really is," Rivers said. "Well, Adrian's going to get some money, that's for sure. And a ring. It's one of these quirky things. I think there should be a rule somehow that someone else does it, other than me. Maybe I'll send my staff, and I'll go on vacation."

How the Chiefs have become the new 'it team' in professional sports

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—The polarizing moniker is still applied to the Dallas Cowboys these days, regardless of whether it rings as true as it did during their 1990s heyday, when Troy Aikman, Michael Irvin and Emmitt Smith led them to three Super Bowl titles in a four-year span.

"America's Team."

The team that much of America loved, and perhaps just as much loved to hate.

In truth, there have been plenty of "America's Teams" over the years. It was the Steelers with Terry Bradshaw, Lynn Swann and Joe Greene in the 1970s. In the '80s, it became the 49ers with Joe Montana, Roger Craig and Jerry Rice. The 2000s, of course, belonged to the Patriots and Tom Brady, Troy Brown and Rob Gronkowski.

The title these days has fallen on the Kansas City Chiefs, who play the San Francisco 49ers next weekend in their fourth Super Bowl in five years. Patrick Mahomes has become the face of the league, a record-breaking crossover star at the game's most important position. Andy Reid has evolved into their mustachioed father figure, and a shoo-in for the Hall of Fame as he climbs the coaching career wins list. And then there's Travis Kelce, who happens to be dating pop icon Taylor Swift.

Just like those teams before them, the Chiefs have merged zeitgeist and success to create a rapidly expanding fan base that stretches from the heartland all the way to Hollywood. And abroad, for that matter, as evidenced by the overwhelming support they have received for games in London, Mexico City and Frankfurt, Germany.

AP

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (15) holds the Lamar Hunt trophey as Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce looks on after an AFC Championship NFL football game against the Baltimore Ravens, Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024, in Baltimore.

"I think you feel it a little bit," acknowledged Mahomes, who has become ubiquitous on TV even when he's not slinging passes on Sundays. He might be stealing some nuggies from Reid on a spot for State Farm, or manicuring his iconic 'do in an ad for Head & Shoulders or teaming up with Kelce to take on the Warriors' Steph Curry and Klay Thompson in a made-for-TV golf match played at Wynn Golf Club, not far from Allegiant Stadium, where the Chiefs will play the 49ers next Sunday.

"The commercials probably help out a lot," Mahomes continued, "and the run that we've been on. I think until I actually go around the world and see the different types of stuff, I don't think I'll realize it enough, the impact that we've had."

Reid already has witnessed it. He took a vacation to Italy a couple of years ago and when he walked out of his hotel the first morning, Reid was recognized almost instantly by a group of kids.

"They loved Pat," he said with a smile. "They knew all our guys."

Their impact on the NFL has certainly been astounding.

The league was responsible for 24 of the 25 most-watched TV broadcasts during 2023, headlined by more than 115 million viewers when the Chiefs beat the Eagles in last year's Super Bowl. Next on the list was the AFC title game, when more than 53 million tuned in to watch the Chiefs beat the Bengals at Arrowhead Stadium.

In fact, according to Nielsen, the Chiefs were involved in 16 of the 100 most-watched TV broadcasts overall last year.

With huge viewership numbers comes massive merchandise sales, far outstripping what reasonably could be expected of a team that plays in one of the NFL's smallest markets. The sale of Chiefs gear increased by 20% last season to rank fourth among all franchises, according to Fanatics, which takes into account its own website along with the NFL Shop and other outlets, and shipments were made to more than 80 countries around the world.

Mahomes has the fourth-fastest selling jersey in the league, Fanatics said. Kelce is No. 8 with sales up 100% over last season.

On the subject of jerseys, Kelce's game-used threads from a 2015 game recently sold at auction for $19,520, and a jersey from 2019 sold for $36,905. The jersey Mahomes wore when he threw four touchdown passes in win over the Raiders on Oct. 10, 2022, went for $213,500 just last month, the most expensive jersey of his ever sold.

"Chiefs memorabilia has been skyrocketing this season," said Ken Goldin, founder and CEO of Goldin Auctions, which handled all three sales. "With the record-breaking Mahomes jersey sale and the two highest-priced Kelce jerseys ever selling within weeks of each other, we really see the Chiefs fanfare boosting the memorabilia market."

The Chiefs have become the "it team" for the Hollywood subset, too.

Jason Sudeikis, Paul Rudd, Eric Stonestreet and Heidi Gardner are regulars at games, though all have ties to Kansas City. Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively joined Swift at a game this season. Brad Pitt often sports a hat with the Chiefs' logo, while Henry Winkler prefers to don the No. 15 jersey of his favorite quarterback.

Melissa Etheridge is one of the longest-serving celebrity Chiefs fans. The rock icon, who grew up in nearby Leavenworth, Kansas, was recently on "Who's Talking to Chris Wallace?" and was asked about Kelce's relationship with Swift, which began with a much-publicized friendship-bracelet saga this past season.

"I think it's fantastic. I love it," Etheridge told the CNN anchor during their wide-ranging interview. "I'm just worried he's going to retire early to be with her."

Spoken like a true diehard.

Just like so many versions of "America's Team," though, a certain amount of fatigue also is setting in. What was once a plucky underdog franchise that hadn't won a Super Bowl in 50 years, and whose quarterback had that adorable Kermit the Frog voice and whose tight end implored everyone to "fight for your right to party," has become suffocating.

They are everywhere. Overexposed. And some fans are downright sick of them.

"I was at a watch party for the games last weekend and every time a Kelce or Mahomes commercial came on, there was this collective groan from the room," said Justin Johnson, who helps produce the pregame show for Baltimore's flagship radio station, 98 Rock; the Chiefs beat the Ravens 17-10 in the AFC championship game.

"This wasn't a bunch of Baltimore fans, either. I think anyone with that level of success can quickly become the heel," Johnson added, before musing: "We should all be so lucky to be hated like this."

Mahomes believes the Chiefs still have plenty of work to do before they can be considered "America's Team," or replace the Patriots as the latest NFL dynasty. He points out that New England won six Super Bowls, tied with the Steelers for the most of any franchise, and the Chiefs have won only three — two since he's been the QB.

They can make it four next Sunday, when they play the 49ers in a Super Bowl trending to be the most expensive ticket in history. So many high-rollers are flying in that private jet parking is maxed out, leaving some to wonder if Swift will be able to find a spot when she is expected to land from her overnight flight from her Eras Tour concert in Tokyo.

"We know nothing is going to be given to us. We've got an even bigger target on our back than we did last year," Chiefs safety Justin Reid said. "But as far as the mentality in the room, we're working to continue this dynasty, and continue to build on what we did last year, not just rest on our laurels of what we did."

NFL BRIEFS

Bill Belichick takes out newspaper ad to thank New England fans for their support

Former Patriots coach Bill Belichick took out a full-page newspaper ad on Sunday to thank Boston fans for their support during his time on the New England sideline. "For 24 years, I was blessed to feel your passion and your power," said the ad, which ran in Sunday's Boston Globe and includes an image of Belichick overlooking a large crowd. "Six times, you packed Boston by the millions for parades that were truly a two-way expression of gratitude and love," he wrote. "The images from those days are burned in my memory." Belichick coached the Patriots to six Super Bowl championships and 17 AFC East titles in a 19-year span. But the team struggled after quarterback Tom Brady left, with three losing seasons in four years and a 4-13 record in 2023 that led to Belichick's departure. Although he interviewed twice for the Atlanta Falcons position, the offseason hiring cycle appears to have concluded without him landing a new job. Belichick was known for his time in both Cleveland and New England for being closed-lipped and refusing to engage with reporters or fans longing for information about the team.

But now that he's gone, the hoodie-wearing coach even poked fun at his reputation as a grouch. "You may even have enjoyed my fashion sense and press conferences, or maybe you just tolerated them," he wrote. "I loved coaching here and, together, we experienced some amazing moments."

Veteran NFL coach Leslie Frazier expected to join Seahawks staff, sources say

RENTON, Wash. (AP)—Veteran NFL coach Leslie Frazier is expected to join the Seattle Seahawks as an associate head coach, two people with knowledge of the hire told The Associated Press on Friday. Frazier is the first big addition for new coach Mike Macdonald. The move pairs the youngest head coach in the NFL with Frazier, who has experience as an assistant and head coach in the league. The people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the hire has not been announced by the team. NFL Network first reported the move. Frazier, 64, spent last season out of the NFL following a stint from 2017-22 when he was the defensive coordinator in Buffalo. Frazier has more than two decades of experience coaching in the NFL, first breaking into the league with Philadelphia back in 1999. Frazier also was a defensive coordinator in Cincinnati, Minnesota and Tampa Bay. Frazier also had one stint as a head coach in Minnesota. Frazier took over halfway through the 2010 season and his interim tag was dropped after the season. Frazier's best season came in 2012 when Minnesota went 10-6 and finished second in the NFC North, but lost to Green Bay in the wild-card round of the playoffs. Minnesota tumbled to 5-10-1 in 2013, and he was fired after the season. Frazier and Macdonald overlapped for one season in Baltimore in 2016 when Frazier was working as the secondary coach and Macdonald was a defensive assistant.

NMI draws in 3x3 FIBA Asia Cup set

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The qualifying draws are in for the 3x3 FIBA Asia Cup from March 27-31 in Singapore, as the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series sets to wrap up with its final championship games.

The men's and women's teams representing NMI in the Cup will be set after the championship game this Feb. 24.

The NMI men's team is in Draw B with No. 9 Republic of Korea, No. 14 Indonesia, and No. 18 Sri Lanka, while the NMI women's team is in Draw C with No. 12 India, No. 18 Hong Kong, and No. 13 Indonesia. Games will be played in the Singapore Sports Hub.

Both NMI teams will no doubt be the underdog on this big of a stage, having faced recently only other Micronesian teams in a standard 5v5 matchup. The last 3x3 tourney NMI competed in was the 2017 Vanuatu Pacific Mini Games made up of Jack Lizama, Preston Basa, Dan Barcinas, and Douglas Schmidt.

LEIGH GASES

Team Nesian Built's Douglas Schmidt goes for a layup during the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series championship last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. The draws for NMI's men and women's team are set for the 3x3 FIBA Asia Cup in Singapore this March, with the NMI teams to be announced this Feb. 24 after the final NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series championship game.

Coordinator of the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series, Joe Villacrusis, was asked what his thoughts were on the draws the NMI teams are in, and he said it's going to be interesting.

"I haven't watched any of the other countries play, but I know it's going to be a good experience for our guys to participate in this. Hopefully, they don't get overwhelmed with the different atmosphere," he said.

Lia Rangamar, also a coordinator for the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series, said that when the draw was completed, they saw that all the countries that NMI is going up against are "huge countries with a lot of resources. They have years and years of playing together and so it's going to be a big undertaking to go up against them."

Villacrusis added that what's going to hold the NMI teams is breaking into a new experience and that they might be overwhelmed by the different atmosphere. "But otherwise, just like anything else, when you keep doing it, keep getting exposed to that environment, you get used to it, so we hope to continue that trend."

Rangamar then said that the Asia Cup is bigger than the Pacific Games for them. "Going there is really to experience how we fare and when they're exposed to things that are bigger than what we have here, they're going to come back and see how we can run our programs here better," she said.

"Whether it's the Asia Cup, Micro Games in the Marshall Islands, or the Mini Games in Palau, it's always good to see where you are. When you're focused on just playing the same people, you'll never know how much more you can do. That's a big thing for us—seeing where we fare when we play against others," said Rangamar.

As for how the NMI teams' performance has been since the start of the 3x3 series last November, Villacrusis said, "there has been an improvement. Team Nesian Built has been winning, but they were beaten by a U16 team last month. It just shows 3x3 is unpredictable."

In the region, there's a big push for the 3x3 format because it's more accessible, easier to run, and has a faster rate of play.

Besides the Asian Cup, the NMIBF is setting up a 3x3 team to compete in the upcoming Micronesian Games in Marshall Islands this June, and hopefully in the 2025 Palau Pacific Mini Games.

Rotaract to host 5K Fun Run

By JENISHA DUBRALL
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CORRESPONDENT

To celebrate 10 years of service, the Rotaract Club of Saipan will be hosting a 5K Fun Run on Feb. 24, 2024, with a 6:30am start at the Garapan Fishing Base.

Presented in collaboration with TurnKey Solutions and Run Saipan, the run will begin at Garapan Fishing Base, then runners will turn around at the Japanese Tank at the Quartermaster intersection and head back to the starting line.

In-person registration will open at 5:30am with a fee of $10. All registered runners will receive a free raffle ticket and must be present to claim their prize.

The first 100 finishers will get free shirts (note that sizing is limited).

"We are so proud to have TurnKey Solutions sponsor our event and shirts. Shirts would not have been possible without the guidance of Run Saipan, specifically [Run Saipan association] president Edward Dela Cruz," said Rotaract Club president Richard Baleares during last week's Rotary Club of Saipan meeting.

For those interested in registering in advance, visit:

https://raceroster.com/events/2024/85386/rotaract-club-of-saipan-5k-fun-run.

MARK RABAGO

Rotaract Club of Saipan's 5K Fun Run will be held on Feb. 24 starting at the Garapan Fishing Base.

MANTA

From page 20

Lady Manta Rays won all but one race which was the first sprint of the day; the 1,000m sprint, won by the Lady Dolphins with an impressive time of 6:58:70. At the end of the races, the Lady Manta Rays did end up on top winning majority of the races, with MHS right behind them, and KHS coming in last. Despite being last in regards to points, the Ayuyus paddled their heart out in every sprint and have greatly improved from last weekend's races.

Ayuyus assistant coach Dayna Macaranas said that KHS will be coming back stronger for the upcoming races. "We were able to recognize our mistakes and our determination to learn and fix them is what will allow us to do better as a team," she said.

The mixed races were dominated by the Manta Rays as they glided to the finish line, finishing first in all but one race. MHS was able to secure at least one win for the mixed races with a time of 03:15:80 for the first 500m heat.

"All the schools are doing really well. I can see the progression in quality within the high school athletes, which is what the paddling federation wants to see. They are the future for paddling," said Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation president Justin Andrew.

YAMAGISHI

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The CNMI Department of Labor staff trained almost everyday since last October, with his drive to compete coming from his uncle/coach Bryan Deleon Guerrero, as well as his close friends Jesus and Lorenzo Attao who all have competed and medaled.

As for what's next for him, Yamagishi said, "After getting bronze and silver, I'm even hungrier than ever for gold. I look to return to Guam in October for the Marianas Open International Tournament."

He then thanked his family and "my other half for always supporting me and being patient when it came to me training every day late at night. Also big thanks to all the boys who came to train and helped me prepare for the competition, you all know who you are. I'd like to thank my uncle/coach Bryan Deleon Guerrero and master Baret Yoshida for allowing me to represent Baret Submissions. Last but not least I'd like to thank my Guam brother, Rome Cruz, for taking us in to train on Guam, and also stepping in as my coach during my matches."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Silver/bronze medalist Jacob Yamagishi is on the podium with his silver medal in the Gi-Tournament Male White Belt Adult Open Weight Division. Gold is Bryant Contreras and bronze is Jackson Sullivan.

After the first competition in the Marianas Pro Series, the next event is in Nagoya, Japan on March 9; Manila, Philippines from April 20-21; Seoul, Korea on June 15; and the finale back in Guam on Oct. 12.

MHS

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strong suit is their strong fastbreak and inside plays. Charlz Sanchez and Khristian David led MHS into a 10-point 28-18 lead at the end of the first half from the pair's accurate field goals and commanding inside presence.

The Knights went on to play a cat-and-mouse game for the lead, but the Dolphins always seemed to be one step ahead. Jay Francis Pineda and Lance Lerio were the Knights' go-to duo as they tried to steer the team past the Dolphins throughout the game.

However, the Dolphins just had the upper hand offensively as Sanchez and David drove them home with 15 points and 8 points respectively. Pineda put up 11, while Lerio scored 8.

The Ayuyus then took down the Grace Christian Academy Eagles, 52-39.

Almost all Ayuyus on the team had a piece of the basket as their passing game was on point, burying the Eagles early on.

Reed Camacho had control of the ball the most for the Ayuyus and capitalized on the Eagles' shaky defense and scored 10 points. Frankie Satur used his height to tower over the Eagles and complemented Camacho with 9 markers of his own.

Meanwhile, the Eagles' Jiahao Yang and Eric Lai tried to bring their team back from a double-digit deficit. Even with 12 and 11 points each, they could not catch up to the speedy and hard-shelled Ayuyus.

In the other game that night, Saipan Southern High School beat Saipan International School, 59-37.

MHS 48 – Sanchez 15, David 8, Laquian 7, Licayan 5, Jiang, Suba 4, Ye 3, Tengco 2.

MCS 32 – Pineda 11, Lerio 8, San Nicolas 4, Perez 3, Deleon Guerrero 2, Cepeda 2, Terlaje 2.

Scoring by halves: 28-18, 48-32.

KHS 52 – R. Camacho 10, Satur 9, Santos 7, J. Camacho 6, J. Diaz 6, Gonzales 4, Techur 4, A. Diaz 2, Altamirano 2, #25 2.

GCA 39 – Yang 12, Lai 11, J. Taitano 6, Yumul 9, Jones 1.

Scoring by halves: 22-12, 52-39.

Beal scores 43 points in Washington return to help Suns rout Wizards.

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Sports

NMI draws in 3x3 FIBA Asia Cup set.

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Manta Rays set the bar in Week 2 of va'a races

JENISHA DUBRALL
The Saipan Southern High School mixed team races to the finish line of the PSS Interscholastic Outrigger Races last Saturday, Feb. 3, on the waters off Kilili Beach.

By JENISHA DUBRALL
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CORRESPONDANT

Saipan Southern High School started the va'a season with a bang by winning 10 out of 12 races last Saturday in the second week of the Public School System Interscholastic Outrigger Canoe Race 2023-2024 in the waters off Kilili Beach in Susupe.

The SSHS boys team won every single race including the 500m final with a the time of 02:53:09, and the 1,000m final finishing with a time of 06:17:87.

The MHS boys finished right behind the Manta Rays in both sprint events with a time of 03:04:64 for the 500m and 06:23:00 for the 1,000m. The KHS boys finished shortly after MHS for both final events with a time of 03:13:67 (500m) and 06:35:51 (1000m).

SSHS steersman and stroker Tyler Andrew said, "Making small adjustments to our mistakes from the last race helped us win most of our races because we were able to gel better together as a team."

As for the girls' sprints, the

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Yamagishi, Sablan bring home silver and bronze

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Jacob Yamagishi and Isaiah Sablan brought home two hardware each—silver and bronze—after their matches in the 2024 Copa De Marianas Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Gi/No-Gi Tournament last Saturday held in the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

Both white belts from the CNMI collected medals in their respective divisions, with Yamagishi entered in the Gi Tournament and winning silver in the Male White Belt Adult Open Weight Division, and bronze in the Male White Adult Light Division.

Yamagishi lost to gold medalist from Heights Academy Guam, Bryant Contreras, and the bronze went to Atos Jiu Jitsu Guam's Jackson Sullivan in the Open Division, and in the Light Division, gold went to Atos Jiu-Jitsu Guam's Sean MacPherson and silver was Contreras.

Sablan claimed silver in the No-Gi Tournament's Male White Belt Adult Feather Division, and bronze in the Gi-Tournament's Male White Belt Adult Feather Division.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, silver/bronze medalist Isaiah Sablan, silver/bronze medalist Jacob Yamagishi, gold medalist Masaki Kitami, and silver medalist Kier Agda pose for a photo after the 2024 Copa De Marianas Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Gi/No-Gi Tournament last Saturday held in the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

Sablan of Purebred Jiu-Jitsu fell to gold medalist Atos Jiu-Jitsu Guam's Sebastian Riley in the No-Gi Tournament, with bronze handed to Guma's Shovey Matsumoto. In the Gi-Tournament, gold went to Figo'/Bonsai Jiu Jitsu's Landon Taitingfong and silver was Carlson Gracie Team's Deondra Fontenot.

For 24-year-old Yamagishi, he had a bad start in the competition by dislocating his shoulder and lost. With gritted teeth and iron-clad determination, he popped his shoulder back in and won his next match via armbar for the bronze medal. He then entered in the 10-man open weight division and won silver.

Yamagishi, of Baret Submissions, said of his winnings, "I was glad I was able to get the finish and bring some medals home."

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MHS, KHS still undefeated in boys hoops

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Last season's Top 2 teams are also this season's Top 2 teams so far as Marianas High School Dolphins and Kagman High School Ayuyus varsity teams are undefeated in the 2023-2024 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League.

They have three wins each after they defeated their foes last Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Dolphins first came out high and mighty against the Mount Carmel School Knights, 48-32.

It was a rough-and-tumble game with fouls made left and right, but the Dolphins'

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LEIGH GASES
In this file photo, Marianas High School's Khristian David drives to the basket as he's defended by an Agape Christian School player during their game in the 2023-2024 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.